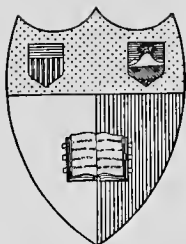


# THE LIFE OF SIR HOWARD VINCENT

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Howard Vincent



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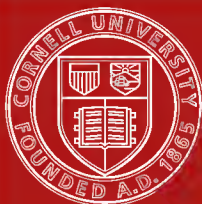
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THE LIFE OF  
SIR HOWARD VINCENT







Photo. J. Russell

Edward Vincent







# THE LIFE OF SIR HOWARD VINCENT

BY  
S. H. JEYES  
CONCLUDED BY  
F. D. HOW

*With Illustrations*

LONDON  
GEORGE ALLEN & COMPANY, LTD.  
RUSKIN HOUSE  
44 & 45 RATHBONE PLACE

1912

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## ERRATA

Page vii, Preface. Date of Mr. Jeyes's death should be 1911.

Page 12. "Llanelly and Chepstow Hounds" should be "Llangibby and Chepstow Hounds."



## PREFACE

I FEEL that a word of explanation for the unfortunate delay in the appearance of this Biography is due to those friends and constituents who have for so long been expecting it.

After much trouble in the selection of a biographer, I ultimately entrusted the writing of the Life, in April, 1909, to the late Mr. S. H. Jeyes, receiving a promise from him that the work should be completed by the end of the year. Unfortunately, owing to ill-health and other causes, eighteen months elapsed before Mr. Jeyes commenced the portion of the work here produced. He was then taken ill, and for six months the work was left untouched, Mr. Jeyes dying in June, 1910.

I was then left in the difficult position of having a half-finished Biography on my hands, with two alternatives to choose from. Either the Life must be begun entirely afresh, which meant further considerable delay, or, still more difficult task, someone of sufficient literary ability might be found willing to complete the book.

All things considered, the latter course seemed the wisest to pursue, and I feel myself very greatly

indebted to Mr. How, who, when the circumstances were placed before him by a mutual friend (Mr. S. G. Richardson of Sheffield), with the most considerate kindness undertook the somewhat unsatisfactory task of finishing the work of another author.

I think Mr. How's part of the Biography, which deals with the more intimate personal life and characteristics of Sir Howard, has been most sympathetically dealt with, and I am very glad of this opportunity of expressing to him my great appreciation of his work.

My thanks are also due to the Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-Wortley, Lt.-Col. Legh, Mr. Stewart (the Public Trustee), Mr. Richardson, Mr. W. Washam, Major Canning, Mr. Gardner, and Mr. Ernest Morgan, for the help that they have given to Mr. How by their personal notes and recollections.

ETHEL VINCENT.

I GROSVENOR SQUARE,  
*October, 1912.*

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. EARLY YEARS . . . . .	I
II. WAR CORRESPONDENT . . . . .	15
III. FIRST POLITICAL AMBITIONS . . . . .	28
IV. TRAVEL, THE BAR, THE PRESS . . . . .	43
V. DIRECTOR OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS . . . . .	53
VI. AT SCOTLAND YARD . . . . .	72
VII. FIGHTING FENIANS AND ANARCHISTS . . . . .	105
VIII. VINCENT AS HOST AND HIS MARRIAGE . . . . .	128
IX. BEGINNING A PARLIAMENTARY CAREER . . . . .	143
X. THE CARNARVON INTERVIEW . . . . .	175
XI. THE FAIR TRADE CHAMPION . . . . .	188
XII. IMPERIAL PREFERENCE AND PROTECTION . . . . .	208
XIII. IN OPPOSITION . . . . .	229
XIV. KINDNESS AND TACT . . . . .	240
XV. SIR HOWARD AS AN AUTHOR . . . . .	255
XVI. SIR HOWARD VINCENT AS A VOLUNTEER . . . . .	263
XVII. THE PUBLIC TRUSTEE ACT . . . . .	287
XVIII. 1895-1899 . . . . .	296

# x      LIFE OF SIR HOWARD VINCENT

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX. THE BOER WAR . . . . .	308
XX. 1900-1901 . . . . .	323
XXI. THE ALIENS BILL, ETC. . . . .	333
XXII. THE FRIEND OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES . . . . .	346
XXIII. LAST DAYS . . . . .	356
INDEX . . . . .	385



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SIR HOWARD VINCENT ( <i>Photogravure</i> ) . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
C. E. HOWARD VINCENT (From the Cartoon in <i>Punch</i> ) . . . . .	60
"CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION" (Cartoon in <i>Vanity Fair</i> ) . . . . .	82
THE MURDERER OF CAREY BEFORE THE MAGISTRATE (From the <i>Graphic</i> ) . . . . .	124
LADY VINCENT . . . . .	139
SIR HOWARD VINCENT IN 1885 . . . . .	168
OH ! OH !! OH !!! MR. SPEAKER !! (From the Cartoon in <i>Punch</i> ) . . . . .	182
SIR HOWARD VINCENT . . . . .	195
A STUDY IN ECSTASY (From the <i>Westminster Gazette</i> ) . . . . .	210
"I WEEP FOR YOU," THE WALRUS SAID (From the <i>Westminster Gazette</i> ) . . . . .	218
THE CONVERSION OF ST. MICHAEL (From the Cartoon in the <i>West- minster Gazette</i> ) . . . . .	227
EXTREMES MEET. BOTH FRIENDS OF THE UNEMPLOYED (From the <i>Daily Graphic</i> ) . . . . .	231
SIR HOWARD ON HIS HOBBY-HORSE (From the Cartoon in the <i>Westminster Gazette</i> ) . . . . .	232
SIR HOWARD VINCENT ON "BASILDON" . . . . .	250
REVIEW OF THE QUEEN'S WESTMINSTERS IN HYDE PARK . . . . .	266
MERCHANDISE MARKS ALL ROUND (From the Cartoon in <i>Punch</i> ) . . . . .	292
THE VILLA FLORA, CANNES . . . . .	312
THE KRUGER HALF-SOYEREIGN . . . . .	321
THE PROTECTIONIST TRIO (From the Cartoon in <i>Punch</i> ) . . . . .	334
MISS VERA VINCENT . . . . .	356



# THE LIFE OF SIR HOWARD VINCENT

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

MORE than once Howard Vincent was invited to write a book of reminiscences, but, indefatigable and versatile as he was, he never saw his way to carrying out a proposal which otherwise he would have been delighted to accept. Throughout his career he courted every honourable form of publicity, and, having nothing to conceal, he profited by living in the light of open day. He possessed some of the qualities most useful to an autobiographer : a tenacious memory, a habit of taking notes, and a temper equally free from vanity or resentment. In the copious memoranda which he compiled he was as careful to record adverse comments on his work as to collect eulogies ; nor in his scribbled explanations have I come across a single sentence which suggests ill-feeling towards official or political adversaries. The good-humour which he displayed in a public life which, in small matters, as in great, was one of incessant conflict had not been assumed in order to disarm opponents ;

it was the outcome of a simple and sunny temperament. Again, the frank pleasure shown in commemorating his successes was not more remarkable than the candour in dealing with his disappointments. It is therefore to be regretted that the rough manuscript which he had drafted in regard to his early years (before he entered the House of Commons) was not continued to the premature close of a useful, fruitful, and not undistinguished career. It has served as the basis of the opening chapter in this memoir. The others have been put together from his diaries, books of press cuttings, and the recollections of personal friends, as well as from private correspondence which at present cannot be printed as it stands.

Charles Edward Howard Vincent was a younger son (by the second wife) of the Reverend Frederick Vincent, Rector of Slinfold, in Sussex, and Prebendary of Chichester, who, in 1880, succeeded his cousin as eleventh baronet. He was born on May 31st, 1849, and as a member of a large family, not rich, had his own way to make in the world. Two of his brothers sought their fortunes, not unsuccessfully, under the Government of India, and a third (Edgar) became Governor of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, after serving as one of the International Commissioners for Eastern Roumelia and as Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government, and has represented Exeter in the House of Commons from 1899 to 1906. But the ability which from the first has been conspicuous in Sir Edgar's varied, energetic, and brilliant career appeared in boyhood to have been withheld from Howard Vincent. His baptismal sponsorship was,

no doubt, stimulating. The names Charles and Howard were taken from one of his godfathers and kinsman, son of the second Earl of Effingham, while the Edward was given by another, Archdeacon Manning,<sup>1</sup> of Chichester, the future Cardinal-Archbishop of Westminster. A third friend had been invited to act as sponsor, a man of great wealth but abrupt manners. On receiving the request he answered *more suo* "I suppose I must," whereupon Sir Frederick Vincent quietly dropped him out of the programme. Apparently he was unaware of the father's decision, for some years later he expressed a wish to pay his godson a visit. On being informed of his mistake he declined to come, and was supposed on that account to have made his will in favour of other relatives.

To members of the House of Commons, brother officers in the Queen's, Westminster, and political friends in Sheffield who knew Howard Vincent as a debonair, alert, and somewhat restless figure, it may be surprising to learn that from childhood upwards he was afflicted with a delicate constitution and later developed a weak heart which brought about the illness which cut him off in what should have been the prime of his public life. He suffered from "fearful coughs" that lasted three or four weeks at a time, and which "all the doctors in Christendom failed to stop." As a lad he spent nearly a year in the house of a Hastings physician, who kept him under a stringent

<sup>1</sup> The intimacy between the Archdeacon and Prebendary is attested by two interesting letters, written at the end of 1850, in which Manning deals with his contemplated secession from the Church of England, and expresses his unabated friendship towards Vincent and his family.

regime. Every morning the throat was burnt with bismuth and nitrate of silver, every evening a mustard poultice was applied to the chest, "The wonder is," he remarks, "that I survived such remedies and that a cough which shocked and annoyed everybody by its violence gave me no pain and should not affect my general health until the heart began to feel the strain." Perhaps it will be more correct to say that his pluck and energy masked the course of the physical ailment. Before those qualities were stirred by ambition the weakness did unquestionably act as a drag upon the boy's progress. It was a serious drawback to his education. He went from school to school; everywhere it was the same story. From all his tutors came despairing tales of idleness and indifference as to his work, while he was not strong enough to take part in games. Private teaching having failed, it was decided to try a public school. In 1864 he was sent to Westminster, where he had been preceded by a brother, his mother's eldest son, a delicate lad who a few years later was to die at Cannes of consumption.<sup>1</sup>

The classical genius of the college was not more sympathetic to the boy's taste than the murky atmosphere of the uncleansed slums was kindly to his constitution. He was "no use," he records, at cricket, football or fives, while generally he was at the bottom of his form. Frequently he came in for "handings" from the headmaster (Dr. Scott). Here is his account of that educational ceremony.

<sup>1</sup> In his memory Lady Vincent set up a tablet at Westminster and instituted an English recitation prize.

“ One used to be called up before the whole school just before the closing Latin prayer. Standing up in the middle one held out the right arm straight from the shoulder, and received four or six cuts on the knuckles from a birch rod handed to the Head Master by a monitor from a drawer in which they were always kept exposed to view as a warning. In winter when the hands were cold the twigs would generally bring blood, but otherwise did not hurt much, and even if they did, one, of course, never showed it.”

And so to prayers! What would happen if a modern working man's son in a Council school were submitted to the discipline which young Vincent and hundreds of other delicate lads half a century ago underwent without wincing or complaining? If they did not learn much Latin they were at least taught to suffer pain without showing it.

Two of Vincent's school reports have been preserved. In one of them his “general conduct” is described as fair, in the other as good. But in both the form-master remarks that his attainments are indifferent and his manner troublesome. The mathematical teacher was a trifle less desponding, and the French teacher almost complimentary. Already the boy seems to have displayed some of that talent for picking up foreign languages which was to be the foundation of his future success. On the whole, however, he was a failure at Westminster, and, wisely enough, his parents removed him at once from the range of a system from which he was physically disqualified from deriving the normal advantage.

Perhaps we should hear less complaint about the drawbacks of public schools if sensible people would recognise that what is meat for most boys may be poison to some, and that those who do not settle down comfortably to the traditional routine should at once be transferred to a more congenial sphere before they have wasted their learning years and spoiled their characters. This was the course adopted by Howard Vincent's parents. At Whitsuntide, 1865, after coming out head of his division in French, he was placed under a tutor at home, where he enjoyed riding about the country and associating with the people, amongst whom he quickly formed many friendships. It is characteristic of his early bent towards public speaking that he liked reading lessons in the village church (built by his father in 1861), and of his helpful disposition that his greatest pleasure, so he records, was found in teaching his brother Edgar (then seven years old) to ride. With his tutor, Mr. William Washam, an excellent and conscientious man, he worked, for the first time in his life, steadily and well. In the summer they were sent abroad, first to France and then to Germany. Howard already delighted in society and went out a great deal. At a *pension* at Amiens he came across some golden-haired ladies of dubious antecedents, but no harm was done beyond their teaching him to smoke. He was soon cured of the habit. One of the fair ladies in the garden after dinner had presented him with a cigarette. Hardly had he lighted it than it was snatched from him by the indignant tutor and trampled on the ground. Promptly he complained to his mother, who judiciously



replied that he might smoke if he liked. No longer possessing the flavour of illicit pleasure the practice was at once abandoned.

By this time the young fellow was fairly master of colloquial French, and made frequent excursions to the centre of Paris. He regularly visited M. de Lamartine in the Rue Cambacérès, where he had a little oblong salon (known as l'Omnibus), where every evening he kept open house to fourteen or fifteen friends who sat along the sides and talked, as clever French people do without desiring any other amusement. The old gentleman used to sit on a sofa near the fire with one or two Italian greyhounds at his feet and one or two more by his side. To such space as was left he welcomed in turn each of his guests. With the fine courtesy of a French gentleman, M. de Lamartine extended to the raw English lad of sixteen or seventeen, in his first tail-coat, the same consideration as he would show to an important visitor. The society in this famous apartment did not affect smartness, but it comprised all the most interesting figures in the politics and literature of Paris in the sixties. Amongst the guests was the Vicomte de Perrenot, son of Charles X's Minister, and by him the young Englishman, with his fluent French and "deplorable accent," was given a certain footing in the literary world of Paris.

In the summer of 1866 the little party moved from Paris to learn German in Dresden. Within thirty-six hours of the breaking out of war between Prussia and Austria the town was occupied by General Herwath von Bittenfeld, the Saxons retreating to

join their Austrian allies under General Benedik in Bohemia. The English visitors were at once ordered to vacate their lodging, and artillery was planted by the house. Already Vincent was bitten with that love for battlefields which was to determine a part of his subsequent career, and his disappointment was deep at not being permitted to follow the fighting. For the time he was compelled to make his home at Aix-la-Chapelle. But in seven weeks, by Moltke's genius and the completeness of the Prussian organisations, the war had been brought to an end, and Vincent returned to Dresden, which he found full of wounded soldiers. He frequently visited some Austrian officers quartered upon an English lady of his acquaintance, and from them gleaned details of the brief decisive campaign, and especially of the great battle of Königgrätz (Sadowa). Presently we shall see how he turned to practical account the knowledge gained through boyish curiosity. Meantime his recent application to more regular studies had been fruitful, for on going up in November, 1866, for Sandhurst, the Westminster dunce passed thirty-seventh out of more than one hundred candidates—a proof that his latent ability did but require a little of that individual supervision and encouragement which in those days, perhaps, it was less easy than it has since become to obtain in a great public school. But though Vincent personally owed little or nothing to Westminster, he always kept a warm corner in his heart for the famous old foundation. Beyond most men of his type, he was possessed with the peculiarly English quality for which we have no complete

English name—*esprit de corps*. The nearest word to it is loyalty, and Vincent was throughout life as loyal to Westminster as he was to his regiments in the Regular Army and the Volunteers; to the Department which gave him his first official employment; to the constituency that sent him to Parliament, and to the House of Commons where he spent the greater part of his working manhood. The popularity and personal influence which afterwards helped him to carry important legislation in an assembly either hostile or indifferent to the specific proposals were largely due to his unaffected good-fellowship. Men who laughed at him as an economic crank or affected to treat him as a Parliamentary bore, found themselves unwilling to disappoint him when he met them on non-party ground.

[Some few reminiscences contributed by Mr. Washam may be inserted with advantage, bearing as they do upon the formation of that character which marked out the future Sir Howard Vincent from the commonplace run of average men.

In the village of Slinfold, where his father was rector, the boy Charlie, as he was then called, was influenced by the devotion to the welfare of the parish which formed the very atmosphere of his home. "He was," says Mr. Washam, "easily accessible, of a cheerful, amiable nature, kindly disposed towards all." The kindliness of feeling which prevailed in the Rectory was, therefore, most congenial to the boy, and encouraged that self-sacrificing helpfulness to others which proved a life-long characteristic.

An example of this occurred during his experience of the war between Prussia and Austria, to which allusion has been made. Charlie Vincent was taken by a Mrs. Hawkins (a relative living near Dresden) to visit the wounded soldiers lying in hospital. "I can imagine," says Mr. Washam, "the interesting conversations he would have with them, and I became aware (though he did not tell me) that he had quietly written to his father and got him to send money that he might buy cigars and other comforts to distribute to the sick."

Yet again he showed early promise of engaging manners and that tact and pleasant "way" in society which was a life-long asset. "What I found so noticeable in him at this period was that in all arrangements and social intercourse he showed a judgment and an amiable tact far beyond the usual schoolboy. He was pleasant and readily at home with all, and quite as much so in the company of persons of distinction as in that of others. He had a very amiable way of addressing those whom he approached and of drawing them into conversation so as to excite their interest and learn whatever they could tell him. In this way he must have gained much that was useful to himself and to others in practical life afterwards."

Charlie Vincent was evidently not the usual English schoolboy, but his health and unusual method of education had set him aside. It must, too, be remembered that, whatever prejudice there may be in the reader's mind in favour of the more gauche and retiring specimens of ordinary boyhood, the whole of Charlie Vincent's surroundings in early days proved

an admirable preparation for the life that lay before him.]

For Sandhurst, as it was when he entered it in January, 1867, as a cadet, Vincent did not profess much affection. It was not then a sort of military university. Rather it was a rough-and-tumble school, where the accommodation was poor and the discipline not above criticism. The novices, or "Johns," were not given a pleasant time by the seniors. Vincent was so unlucky as to fall from a ladder in the gymnasium and received a shock to the spine; he was carried on a hurdle to the hospital, where he lay for several weeks, nor had he long been discharged when he was sent back with scarlatina. The arrangements for the comfort of invalids were unquestionably primitive, and Vincent, "always fond of impulsive letter-writing," as he confesses, and, it may be added, already possessed with passion for addressing himself to headquarters, wrote a formal complaint to the Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Cambridge. No sooner had he despatched the document than he repented of his audacity, and for weeks he lived in an agony of apprehension. Probably the letter was pigeon-holed long before it could reach the old Duke's eyes. Anyhow, no more was heard of it, and on returning after the summer vacation Vincent, alone amongst the Johns, found himself a corporal. This promotion was construed by his companions as evidence of unsportsmanlike devotion to study, and one night, after the lights were out, was avenged with personal violence. After this he was put in charge of a detachment of first-term cadets and sent to the

C Company block. In June, 1868, he passed out of Sandhurst, and "right glad" he was to leave it. In September, 1868, he joined the 2nd battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, then quartered at Newport Barracks and commanded by Colonel E. M. Bell, a gallant officer who had won the V.C. at the battle of the Alma, when, without orders, he left his company and captured the first Russian gun. "We were a happy, merry lot," writes Vincent. All the officers had horses, and went out with the Llanelly and Chepstow hounds. Most of them, he told his mother, were well off, and "fond of sherry," of which they could always drink four or five glasses in the afternoon, and at dinner the same allowance (unless they took it out in champagne). But there was only one recognised sot in the regiment, and even he had his compensating qualities, because, as he did not care about hunting, he might be relied upon, with more or less willingness, to take other men's duty.

Vincent, whose allowance was £160 a year, did not find it easy to go the pace with comrades some of whom were spending at the rate of £500. But on two things he was already resolved. He would not run into debt, nor, in spite of being laughed at, would he drink wine except at meals. His strictness did not make him enemies, for he was proud of the regiment and liked his companions, whom he described as "about the best set of officers that could possibly be met with." But he dreaded being released from duty because that would give him three hours with nothing to do. The release he feared was very soon

accomplished, but it does not appear that he suffered much embarrassment as to disposing of his leisure. He was thoroughly in earnest about his profession, and gratefully recorded the encouragement given to him at an inspection by General Daniel Lysons, himself a loyal Welshman. All the subalterns were had out to drill a company, and Vincent, being junior ensign, came last. Owing to his retentive memory he easily rattled out all the cautions and orders for the movements which he was told to execute. "Last but not least," exclaimed the kindly old General. Vincent, who loved approbation and needed it, was deeply touched by the casual words of praise. They had a marked effect, he says, upon his life. He felt at once that he might accomplish something worth doing, and (he adds), "I have scarcely sat down since."

\* In those days, however, there was not much scope in a regiment for the keen soldier. Vincent volunteered in October, 1869, for the School of Musketry at Hythe (the Snider rifle had just come in), and was given charge of a small squad of non-commissioned officers at Fort Sutherland. There was plenty of fun and high spirits. On one occasion the earnest young student of war indulged in such skylarking that there was a question of sending him back to his regiment. He was forgiven, and presently, though he had been inattentive to the theory of musketry and "could not shoot a bit," he managed after a little study to pass out nearly at the head of the list and received an extra first-class certificate. On the strength of this easily won success he applied for three and a half

months' leave in order to learn Italian. This period he spent chiefly with an Italian family living in the Via del Campuccio in Florence, having paid a visit on the way to his people who were established at Cannes in the Villa Flora, recently purchased by his father. He was a devoted son, and in his busiest or most anxious times never failed to write them long letters about his doings and hopes and plans. No Sunday of his life, even when travelling in the Antipodes, ever passed without the Sunday letter being written. Some of the most important matters of State in which he was afterwards engaged are described at length in confidential outpourings to his mother, nor did he scruple to express himself quite frankly about the distinguished statesmen with whom he was brought into contact. Although he did not acquire a specially vivid style, and never attempted either ornament or epigram, his constant practice in domestic correspondence gave him, by degrees, command of a simple and business-like method of narration. His early letters to his mother were juvenile even for his years, below rather than above the ordinary level of an undergraduate or young officer's composition. In a year or two the change is quite remarkable, and one discovers without surprise that he is resolved upon turning his fluent pen to the advantage of his career.



## CHAPTER II

### WAR CORRESPONDENT

AN opportunity of putting his talent to the test was provided, so it seemed, soon after he had returned in the spring of 1870 from Italy and had been ordered from Aldershot to St. Mary's Barracks, Chatham. On the outbreak of war between France and Germany the young soldier was resolved, if possible, to see something of the fighting. General Lysons' words of commendation still tingled in his ears. Without saying a word to anyone the stripling of twenty-one offered himself as special war correspondent to the *Standard*, *Morning Post*, and *Daily Telegraph*. From the *Daily Telegraph* alone he got a reply—a telegram inviting him to come and see the editor. As soon as he could get leave he joyfully obeyed the summons, and was received very courteously by an assistant editor (Hunt). The account of this exciting interview and its immediate consequences is given in one of his letters (July 10) to his mother. He said: "That I must not let them lose sight of me, and in the event of any change of address I was to be sure and let them know; in fact, he said that he thought that I should do very well for the appointment, and insinuated that I should get it if hostilities were begun. I was sur-

prised that he asked for no proof of my knowledge and no testimonials, and never expressed a fear as to my being too young a man. I came back again to mess, and at 9 p.m. I received a telegram from the *Daily Telegraph* requesting me to come to the office at noon on Friday. Of course I go ; am shown into another room, and presently one Edward Levy turns up, a youngish man who asks several questions : if I have ever written for the Press ? if I can give him any proof of the fluency of my style and rapidity of composition ? for, says he, I know many men who can sit down and write four pages of letter paper with ease and elegance, but when it comes to writing a couple of columns for the Press, under circumstances of difficulty, if not of absolute danger, it stumps them. He was called out of the room for fifteen minutes, so I sat down and wrote seven sheets on the present condition of affairs. He then came in in a great hurry and begged me to write a column and a half on the events of any day or days and send it him by that night's post. So I went to Arthur's lodgings, and without map, book, or reference wrote thirty sheets in eighty-five minutes on the first four days of the war of '66, supposed to have been written from a correspondent in Dresden.

" 1 p.m. Hurrah ! Telegram from *Daily Telegraph* just arrived : ' Please come here at two o'clock to-day ' ; so I suppose they intend to send me out, and that my thirty sheets of rubbish did its work. My expenses will, I suppose, be met, and a small salary given besides, but of course such a young hand could

not get much. And even should I get nothing but my expenses, the introduction and experience it will give me will be of incalculable advantage. How tiresome my being on guard to-day, and unable to get up to town till to-morrow! I hope it will make no difference, but I tremble lest it should. As F. has not yet paid the money due into Cox's I shall have to borrow from him, as Arthur agrees with me that it would not prepossess them in my favour were I to *ask* the *Daily Telegraph* for an allowance. One or two of the minor papers to-day ask: 'How long will England be able to look on a passive spectator?' The preservation of the neutrality of Belgium in its strictest integrity will be essential to our remaining inactive. . . . I shall not close this until I know for certain whether and whither I am to go. I hope you will take in the *D.T.* and let me know what people think of my articles, and point out to me the errors in my style, etc. Also to cut out the articles and place them in a book in consecutive order, so as at the termination of the campaign to be able to have them reprinted in the form of a book. The ruin in the mercantile world, both at home and abroad, is said to be extraordinary from the fall in Government securities. I now conclude for the day, so with much love,

"Believe me ever to be

"Your very affectionate son,

"CHARLIE."

"Sun. even. Just come down from town. Had to write another article this afternoon, which was approved, so the editor sends me to Berlin to-morrow,

if the consent of the Government can be obtained. The proprietors of *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* see the Duke to-morrow morning early, the former for Hozier, the latter for me. The advantage in a military and literary point of view for me is incalculable ; and I owe much to you and F. for your sound and careful education. You had better send your next letter addressed to Arthur, who will know if I am gone or not. The Cabinet-in-Council have issued an order forbidding full-pay officers to go out, so I may have to go *pro tem.* upon half-pay. Good night. I have many preparations to make, as I have to be ready to start at a moment's notice."

In another account of the trial at the *Daily Telegraph* we read that every few minutes the would-be correspondent was disturbed by somebody coming into the room and asking him questions—in order to test his capacity for writing under difficulties. Indeed, it required no little assurance to face the test successfully. There is a story of a politician, now a veteran, who in his early days was employed by the leader of his party to feed an important London newspaper with notes and "tips" on the politics of the day. These were worked into leading articles by practised writers for the Press. But on one occasion the information supplied was so delicate that the bearer could trust nobody with the handling of it. He would do the leader himself. He was put into a quiet room, and strict orders given that he should be left absolutely undisturbed. After a couple of hours, when no manuscript had been received by the printer,

the editor began to grow uneasy, and presently peeped into the room. There he saw the news-bearer in all the agonies of ineffectual composition, the floor littered with scraps of rejected beginnings. There was no time to be lost if the article was to appear in the next issue. An old hand at the game was summoned from a neighbouring tavern, and into his not over-sober ears the confidential statement was hurriedly repeated. In less than an hour the editor was reading the proof. Vincent, however, seemed to require no preliminary training. He took off his coat and went right away at his work. True, the subject given him was one with which he happened to be specially familiar. If that was lucky, as perhaps it may have been, it was the sort of luck that only befalls the man who never throws away a chance. The reason why the topic suggested by the editor turned out so conveniently was that Vincent, being keen on his profession as a soldier, had filled his mind with first-hand information on what was then the most recent and grandest test of the modern science of war. It was by merit as well as through self-confidence that Vincent obtained the coveted appointment. Evidently the authorities of the *Daily Telegraph* thought well of their recruit. They gave him (as he wrote to his father a week later) very handsome allowances, and arranged for him to be attached to the Crown Prince's Staff.

“But all this is, as it were, a dream,” adds the young man; “this morning the Cabinet agreed unanimously that for grave reasons of State no

officer on full or half-pay was to leave England. Hozier's case and mine were specially laid before them, but no go."

The official determination was not to be shaken. It was considered by older heads than Vincent's that England could not long keep out of the conflict, and every officer in the Army was needed at his post. All that the aspiring young fellow gained directly by the incident was the satisfaction of knowing that he had been selected by the *Daily Telegraph* from a large number of candidates. For this honour, he writes that he is indebted to the "well-judged though expensive education" provided for him by his father. The money spent upon his teaching and travels seems to have oppressed his mind with a sense of unusual obligation towards his parents, and his letters about this period are full of speculation as to how he may best repay them. His eagerness to make a career for himself is keenly stimulated by the hope of winning credit for his father and mother. Incidentally he profited by making the acquaintance of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* and establishing the basis of a future connection, while the efforts made by Colonel Napier Sturt to relax the official veto in his favour were the commencement, Vincent remarks, of the greatest friendship which he ever formed.

The pangs of his personal disappointment were, no doubt, mitigated by the hurry and scurry of making up in a few weeks for years of military inertia. Suddenly, as from a dream of enduring peace, the Government were awakened to the realities of war,

and began to make preparations for defending the neutrality of Belgium! Vain as the project was, all ranks in the British Army were worked at high pressure. The preternatural effort did not long outlast the preliminary panic, and presently the War Office returned to the old jog-trot methods.

So far from being disheartened at the failure of his nearly realised ambition, Vincent declared that it acted as an incentive to renewed and lasting exertion. "Since that time," he put on record, "figuratively speaking, I have never sat down or rested. Literally, I believe, I have never sat down in an arm-chair."

On rejoining his regiment he found that his little affair was the subject of much comment, and as a writing man he was credited with many Press contributions of which he was altogether innocent. But he did write a good deal for the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Observer*, while in the *Army and Navy Gazette*, as he naively remarks, he found that by means of paragraphs or notes he was able to expose abuses in the Service, and advocate reforms which he had at heart. It was an effective way of bringing his views before the military authorities. As the authorship was either known at headquarters, or could easily have been ascertained, one may assume that the authorities winked at a practice which every now and again they visited with the severest pains and penalties. Possibly they may have been amused by the fact that these ex-cathedra utterances were the work of a "hairless subaltern of two years' service." Vincent, however, was known as a promising young officer, zealous in his regimental duties, and probably he was treated

with special indulgence. He enjoyed the friendship and support of an influential person in the editor of the *Gazette*, the late Sir William Russell, whose work as the *Times* correspondent in the Crimea had given him an altogether exceptional position in the military Press. On one occasion he remarked to Vincent that if a man wished to get on he must keep his name before the public, and it must be confessed that his pupil acted throughout life on that maxim. Up to this point, however, he had entertained no thought of quitting a Service in which the pursuit of publicity might become dangerous. Almost more keenly than his disappointment over the *Daily Telegraph's* offer did he regret his failure to be made adjutant. Just at the time when the vacancy occurred he was afflicted with a "perfect plague of boils." He had been selected by the Colonel, but this inopportune indisposition led to another officer being appointed. With all a very young man's seriousness Vincent moralises on the perversities of human fortune. But Providence, he adds, watches over all and orders for the best.

For the present he contented himself with a useful and timely task, a translation into English of the reports by Colonel Stoffel, Military Attaché to the French Embassy in Berlin, on the German organisation for the field. These documents, which demonstrated the superiority of the Prussian army over the French, though prepared for Napoleon III, were either ignored or set aside as the vain imaginings of an enthusiast. Vincent compares the French treatment of Colonel Stoffel's warnings to the fate that befell the late Sir William Butler's reports in 1898 and 1899 on the state of



affairs in South Africa. The translation of Stoffel's work was first published in successive numbers of *Fraser's Magazine*, and afterwards re-issued by Messrs. Longmans. The book had a considerable sale, and brought in more than £40 to the translator—a fair return on that kind of venture. Indirectly the advantage was more considerable, as he was invited by the *Daily Telegraph* to replace, for a time, their Special Correspondent in Berlin. The honorarium was not impressive, but the experience would be invaluable, and, having obtained leave, Vincent repaired to the Prussian capital there to spend the months of January and February, 1871. The social life of the city was depressing enough, as everybody was in mourning for some relative fallen in the war, and people thought of little else than how to relieve the sufferings of the troops investing Paris that very severe winter. News was scanty in Berlin and hard to obtain. The whole administration was centred at Versailles under King William, and all valuable information was telegraphed thence by the Special Correspondents attached to the German headquarters. Vincent's stay in Berlin was, however, rendered interesting by the visits he paid to French prisoners at Spardau and elsewhere, as well as by the opportunity of commencing his firm friendship with Count Münster, who was afterwards to be German Ambassador both in London and Paris. At this time his position was regarded as somewhat equivocal. As a Hanoverian noble of great wealth his acceptance, after the events of 1866, of the Prussian annexation was unpleasantly criticised, and even the Prussians, so Vincent declares, looked coldly upon him.

From dull and deserted Berlin, where a Special Correspondent had little to do except amuse himself as best he might, Vincent was recalled on February 10; but as he was on the point of starting home, he was requested by his friend the British Ambassador (Lord Augustus Loftus) to carry urgent despatches to H.M. Minister at Copenhagen. Hamburg was reached by train; then the difficulties began.

“Through Holstein the terrific snow-storms made progress most difficult. Snow ploughs had to be constantly used to clear the line, and despite every effort two bitter nights had to be passed in roadside stations. That, however, was nothing compared to the difficulty of getting over the Great Belt, which was nearly frozen over. The Postmaster of Nyborg refused to send the mails as it was too dangerous, and a party of passengers had been adrift on the ice for five days, six succumbing. I had no alternative, therefore, but to engage a private ice-boat at considerable cost. The start was for five a.m. on the following morning, and I got a Swede who had been in the train to come with me as companion. The boat had stout beams fastened across it. The baggage was placed in the boat, and the passengers were required to assist the crew of eight in pushing the boat on its iron keel over the rough fields of ice. Fortunately the snow stopped falling soon after dawn and the weather cleared somewhat. But the excitement came when we reached the brittle edge of the ice-field, and had to push the boat into the water. Equally, or even more, difficult was it to land on the next field. After many adven-

tures, however, we arrived at Korsov and there took train to Copenhagen, having spent nearly a week in the journey from Berlin."

On the evening of his arrival Vincent was invited to a "little family dance" at the Palace, which was given to amuse the Princess Thyra (afterwards Duchess of Cumberland), who had just "come out," and appeared even more beautiful, so Vincent thought, than her two Imperial sisters.

After being honoured by the Princess Thyra with a *tour de valse*, Vincent was standing alone near when he was approached by a kindly old gentleman of middle age who asked why he was not dancing.

" ' Pourquoi ne dansez vous pas ? ' "

" I replied, not recognising the questioner : ' Malheureusement, Monsieur, je ne connais personne. ' "

" He put his arm in mine and said :

" ' Venez avec moi. Nous allons essayer de vous trouver une danseuse. ' "

" After walking round the room he took me up to a very charming young lady—Mademoiselle de Breton, whose first dance it was. My kind friend said to her :

" ' Mademoiselle, puisque vous ne dansez pas, permettez moi de vous presenter un jeune officier anglais qui vient d'arriver. ' Like me, Mademoiselle de Breton did not recognise the introducer, and replied that ' she was engaged. ' "

" The music stopping, my friend withdrew, saying merrily : ' Pas de chance ce soir. ' "

" I thought no more of the incident until after supper.

Grosvenor (First Secretary of the Legation) came to me and asked if I had been presented to the Crown Prince, afterwards Christian VII. I replied, 'No,' when he said it must be arranged at once, and he ought to have thought of it before.

"He went to ask Count ———, the Equerry of the Crown Prince, when an opportunity would occur.

"He replied hotly: '*Je ne crois pas que votre compatriote demande beaucoup de presentation puisqu'il est allé demander au Roi de lui trouver une danseuse.*'

"Grosvenor was very angry, and on learning the facts from me and that I had failed to recognise the King, consulted Sir Charles Wyke (the Minister), who agreed with him that an apology must be immediately demanded of the Equerry, and, failing it, I must at once send him my seconds. It was too late to settle the matter that night, but Grosvenor called on Count ——— in the morning, and after some demur he apologised for his mistake, and left a card for me at the Phoenix. It was, however, a disagreeable incident."

In August, 1871, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers were stationed at Woolwich, and there Vincent was able to prosecute old intimacies in London society and form new friendships. But his heart all the time was steadily fixed upon professional advancement. Fired by the success of Colonel Fred Burnaby's ride to Khiva, he determined to make himself master of Russian, a "language that nobody knew," but which would be invaluable in the event, then apparently not remote, of an Anglo-Russian conflict in Central Asia.

Having obtained from Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, a circular letter to His Majesty's Consul in Russia, he started in January, 1872, for St. Petersburg, via Warsaw, having resolved on the way to study the Polish question. Already it had become a fixed principle with this shrewd and serious young man that to understand the political problem the first thing necessary was to examine it on the spot and make the acquaintance of the chief actors of the scene. How steadily he carried out this rule will be seen as we trace his subsequent career. Forty years ago, be it remembered, it was an innovation, almost an adventure, for a young British officer to set about acquiring systematic information about the higher matters of European statecraft. At the outset, perhaps, Vincent did not go very deeply into causes and conditions, but at least he familiarised himself with the outward aspect of political movements and national circumstances, and was thus entitled to speak with greater authority than can be claimed by persons whose knowledge is based merely on the reading of books and newspapers.

## CHAPTER III

### FIRST POLITICAL AMBITIONS

**T**HANKS to Vincent's friendship with M. de Berg, who for many years had been Russian Consul-General in London, he found in Warsaw a cordial reception from the Governor and the Army officers. His riding, his good manners, and especially his drinking powers (though habitually abstemious he had put three of his hosts under the table) were cordially admired. He was made free of the Grodno Hussar's mess, and on the Russian New Year's Day a banquet was held in his honour. This was all very pleasant, but it did not help him to learn the language. A tutor was, however, recommended to him, an Army captain who could not talk English. He demanded what Vincent considered the exorbitant fee of three roubles a lesson, so was discarded in favour of a lady teacher, governess in Colonel Mansfield's house. Meantime, he was busy in collecting information about the Russian Army, and this he embodied in a report which Colonel Mansfield sent to the British War Office. Its value was recognised by Captain (afterwards Sir) Charles Wilson, then at the head of the Topographical Department. It contained, he said, a good deal of new matter. Vincent was at the same time urged to work away at Russian as books in

that language were "closed" to the War Office. For the present, however, it was impossible to meet his wishes as to joining the Topographical Department—first he must pass through the Staff College. Nor could he count on any great extension of leave.

The departure from Warsaw was not altogether voluntary. The place had become (he told his mother) too hot to hold him. Between the Russians and Poles there was no kind of social intercourse, but Vincent, as his manner was, had been on friendly terms with both parties. This led, he found, to a double jealousy. Moreover, his prolonged stay had suggested that he was a secret agent for the British Government, and the commanding officers were wiggled for having shown him so much of their regimental arrangements. The visit, however, was not without its influence in his career, for Colonel Mansfield wrote in very laudatory terms about him to the Duke of Cambridge. His carefulness in money matters and reluctance to put his parents to unnecessary expense may be judged from the fact that his month in Warsaw (without the journey) cost him just twenty pounds.

In St. Petersburg he found kind friends at the Embassy in Lord and Lady Augustus Loftus. He was introduced by them to the Countess Rostodloff, widow of the statesman who carried out in detail the emancipation of the serfs. She was often visited by the Emperor Alexander II, who used to arrive in a one-horse sleigh accompanied only by his collie dog. He would go upstairs and ring the bell without any

kind of ceremony. His kind, lovable face, writes Vincent, his gentle demeanour and friendly manners, were but typical of his liberal disposition. He was greatly interested in the young English officer's eagerness to learn Russian, and laughed at his plan of quartering himself on some middle-class family where no other language was spoken. Vincent, when suited with a domicile, worked eleven hours a day, and took the heroic course of attending three masters, each with a different system. The rest of the time he spent in talking to his hostess and her daughter. (Owing to a quarrel with a member of the British Embassy, healed only by a formal reconciliation, he was cut off from a good part of the gaieties that might have distracted him from his studies.) A sharp refusal from his Colonel to extend his leave induced him to consider whether he should not try to get on the staff of Lord Northbrook, who had been appointed Governor-General of India. It would be a pity, he writes with simple self-satisfaction to his father, to exile himself when by reputation, at least, he had "hardly a rival in European languages." He was saved from the embarrassment of making a decision by the fact that the Viceroy, after wavering for some time, decided in favour of another applicant. "Let Vincent learn Russian," such was the message he sent by General Napier Sturt, "and then, no doubt, I can do something for him."

Amongst his friends in St. Petersburg were Mr. Morgan (partner in the firm of Gillibrand Hubbard) and Mr. (now Sir) Donald Mackenzie Wallace, then engaged on his great book about Russia.



On April 14 (no extension of leave having been obtainable) Vincent rejoined his regiment at Woolwich. In those days the War Office did not go out of its way to encourage young officers in the study of foreign languages, and the regimental authorities, not unnaturally, were jealous of prolonged absence. Vincent did, however, obtain a letter of recognition from Pall Mall of his report upon the state of the Russian Army. With it was a warrant for £35 (the Treasury in its kindly fashion having docked £15). At the Horse Guards he was cordially received by the Duke of Cambridge, who said that he had read every word in Vincent's report. Writing to his father and mother, he expresses a hope that he may be sent out to supervise the repair of the Crimean cemeteries, though, of course, the Engineers could fight hard against any appointment going outside the sacred corps.

On May 17, 1872, at the Royal United Service Institution, Vincent gave a lecture which was well attended and fully reported in the leading London newspapers. Clearly he was beginning to get on in the Army, his age being twenty-three. But there was in his nature a tendency, never quite eradicated, towards being a rolling stone. One morning in August his eye was caught by an advertisement for a parliamentary candidate. Without a moment's hesitation the penniless subaltern approached the agents and entered into preliminary negotiations. He had gone so far as to prepare an address to his proposed constituents, when it occurred to him that the matter might concern his parents. He sent his

mother a copy of the document. "Bravo," she replied, "the address is excellent. How I wish I could give you £1000 a year. But wanting that, I fear the parliamentary career is closed to you." His father, who had similarly been taken into confidence, replied in equally damping terms, so that, for the time being, the young subaltern's political ardour was quenched. He was proposing, it may be noted, to stand in the Conservative interest.

The first Autumn Manœuvres were held under the new system in August, 1872, at Blandford. Thanks to the friendly interest displayed by Colonel Herbert, assistant adjutant-general at headquarters, in a promising young officer of his own regiment, Vincent received seven offers of Staff employment. The one he most eagerly wished to accept was that of aide-de-camp to General Arthur Hardinge. But though he had been four years in the regiment he was still junior lieutenant. "A feeling, therefore, arose, especially amongst the majors, that for that dignified position I had an altogether excessive share of notoriety. The Colonel, who was fatally easy-going, was therefore persuaded to answer, on application being made for my services, that I could not be spared from regimental duty." The adjutant brought in from the other battalion "knew, moreover, that there was much feeling in my favour in the battalion, and especially among the non-commissioned officers. I was, therefore, compelled to carry the regimental colours for the thirty days of long hot marches, until my shoulders were black and blue. It was especially mortifying to see the staff on which I might have

been, but for stupid regimental hindrance, galloping by, while I was trudging footsore along bearing a flag, which, although of honour, was utterly useless in active service except as a mark for the enemy. I never stopped directing attention to this fact. But it was some years before Lord Wolseley obtained sufficient authority to have them left at home."

"I have been atrociously cheated," and "can hardly control my indignation," he writes to his mother, and these perhaps are the strongest words that he ever used in the course of a career chequered in the many successes and some grave disappointments. But it was not by such treatment that the ambitious subaltern could be cured of his pursuit of publicity. About this time he brought out a book entitled *Russia's Advance Eastward* (in the main a translation of a German lieutenant's account of a journey across Central Asia), and followed it up with a manual, intended for the use of non-commissioned officers, on *Elementary Military Geography, Reconnoitring, and Sketching*. This was not very successful, the author remarks, as it was in advance of the time.

On the conclusion of the Army Manœuvres the regiment was ordered to Ireland, the C Company, to which Vincent belonged, being quartered at Navan, the hunting centre of County Meath. Besides taking part in that sport, the restless young officer found occupation in conducting night classes for the soldiers, and in running a dramatic troupe. So successful were the performances (one of them being attended by the Lord Lieutenant and Lady Spencer) that not

only were the expenses cleared, but enough money was left over to buy sixty-eight tons of coal to be retailed chiefly among the deserving poor of the neighbourhood. By means of this harmless amusement the soldiers were kept out of mischief, not a single member of the Company being entered on the defaulter's sheet. Naturally the Company was popular, and generally there was a crowd waiting to cheer it in the streets. Bishop Nulty of Meath invited all the parish priests of the diocese to meet Vincent at dinner, and some of them lent him their horses to hunt. It was reported that he would stand for the county as a Home Ruler, and the local newspaper published a flaming eulogy of his character and work.

“Although he has had no formal vote of thanks passed to him, yet he must have seen as he moves about on his disinterested mission that he has won a place in the heart of the people of Navan which neither time nor change of residence will soon obliterate. Men of his stamp—active, intelligent, and honourable—are the life and soul of a country. To such as he should be confided the legislation for a people; men who are ever active to seize upon every opportunity to advance the public good, whose views are not narrow or contracted, but who look ahead with the eye of a statesman to everything likely to add greatness, glory, and prosperity to a country. Nature has stamped him as one of her nobility, and no matter where he may be, he is sure to make a mark, and in the end attain to such a high position as he is so well qualified to fill.”

He frankly relished the popular incense, and confesses that his head was a little turned. In the *Irish Times* of March 18, 1873, he wrote over his initials the following letter :

“There are few people knowing anything of Irish affairs who can conscientiously assert that the island has no just grievance to prefer against the present system of administration at the hands of England. If some glaring examples were wanted the question of the Irish railways would furnish it, but it is only one instance of the neglect and delay of beneficent Irish legislations in the Imperial Parliament. Much has undoubtedly been done of late, but still more remains on hand. The origin of so unsatisfactory a state of things is not traceable to any isolated fact, but to an unfortunate combination of circumstances. The chief of these lies not in any antipathy to Ireland on the part of England and Scotland, not in any league against that which tends to advance her welfare and prosperity, but rather in an excess of business over time for its due performance. Such is acknowledged to be the case by both sides of the House of Commons and in every organ of public opinion.

“The British Parliament takes cognizance of far more trifling matters than any other legislature. It is well that it is so, for it affords a far surer guarantee of the liberties of the people. Any practicable way to the dilemma ought then to be eagerly hailed, and yet more gladly if it brings peace and justice. Ireland hands the way to England. She prays to be allowed to take the burden of her local legislation

off the shoulders of the too sorely weighted Imperial Parliament. To her prayer has been assigned the term 'Home Rule.' It is an unfortunate term. Everybody in England misunderstands it. They think it aims directly, wholly and solely at the reversal of the Monarchy, at the abolition and severance of the Union. But let me assure English and Scotch legislators that it simply means the establishment of a more rapid and less tedious and costly method of local legislation by an assembly in Dublin, fitted by their associations and education to appreciate the merits and demerits of the various schemes submitted to them for the National improvement with time. Moreover, for the discussions of the details armed with an accurate knowledge of the precise necessities of the situation.

"Am I not right in this definition of Home Rule and the wants of Irishmen? True, there may be some who in it seek for the dissolution of the Union, but these men should be promptly silenced, for by their unseemly clamour they put an impassable barrier in the path of justice to their country. How could England ever consent to the severance of the Union? What could she do without Ireland? Where could she produce her staunchest soldiers? What could Ireland do without England in these days when might is essentially right, when small independent nations are deemed fair prey by the stronger ones. Let those, and they are the majority of Irish voters, who send all their marketable produce to England tell me how they would like to see an export duty and an import duty between their farms and the English market.

“Let Ireland talk in future of National, not of Home Rule, interests. Let it not be said of an Irish member: ‘So-and-so, the Home Ruler,’ for an English House of Commons will never disbelieve that he wants to sever the Union. Let him be called a Nationalist.

“If throughout Ireland members are returned to Parliament—men of moderate yet stable views—a few years will see the realisation of Irish hopes and Irish efforts.

“An Irish Parliament composed of two Houses would be too complicated a system. Let there be an Irish National Council composed of the bishops, of elected members from the counties and towns, and of landowners of a certain defined extent of possession, not necessarily peers, although the majority might chance to be so. The National Council would sit in Dublin, elect a President with such subordinate officers as might be deemed necessary; this nomination would be subject to the approval of the Queen, and he would fill the post now occupied by the Chief Secretary. The attention of the National Council would be confined to Irish affairs, measures of local administration, improvement, education, interior economy, etc., but each bill would be submitted for the nominal assent of the Crown. The main functions of Imperial Government would necessarily be still confined to London, including taxation, unless it was agreed that Ireland should annually furnish a lump sum to the Imperial Exchequer, the method of its levying being left to the decision of the Council.

“This would necessitate Ireland being represented

in the Imperial Parliament. Let one member of the National Council in every four, i.e. a fourth of the whole, elected by their colleagues, be sent to London to give expression to Irish sentiment on Imperial Legislation. Even if the Sessions were simultaneous the remaining three-fourths of the Irish National Council could well transact the business.

“In such a scheme there could be nothing extravagant, nothing to wound English susceptibilities, especially if it were first asked for on a trial of seven years.

“As to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, there would be no occasion for its present vacillating occupancy. But let a Prince of the Blood Royal permanently adorn Ireland.”

Like other would-be pacifiers of Ireland, Vincent was hugely pleased with his own particular scheme. What was his surprise and disgust when on the morning after its appearance he met Lord Spencer out hunting and was cut dead before all the field! The local gentry were at first inclined to follow the Lord Lieutenant's example, but personally he was so much liked that he was let off with chaff—and plenty of it.

He was burning, he confesses, to get into Parliament, and would, no doubt, have stood on the platform thus laid down by himself. On several occasions he was informally approached with that purpose, and asked his father “how he would view such a contingency.” A few passages from the long letter addressed to his father may be cited, because they



illustrate both the mental exaltation to which he confesses and give an amusing combination of juvenile ideals in self-reliance with practical consideration of Ways and Means. He figures out in the most business-like fashion that with £100 a year from his father he will have a fair temporary income. First there will be editorial employment which he modestly estimates at £500; then there is £300 from another source not mentioned—total £900. As for getting into Parliament, that is practically certain.

“So thoroughly imbued are all classes with the sense of my ability, my energy, my business-like habits, my integrity, my power of conciliation, my charity, and my oratory. The gentry would accept me as a “*pis-aller*,” because they might do far worse; the priests are among my most devoted disciples, not only the priests of the town, but the Bishop and the diocese and the people will follow me anywhere. I quieted and dispersed a mob the priest had found implacable, and a look controls the most refractory of spectators. Blessings follow me in the marketplace, cheers precede my walk. And as to politics, I have hit on a new and entirely original scheme for Irish Policy, which meets with the strongest approval of the priesthood and mass of electors.” Nor need it be feared that his Protestantism will be imperilled by Roman Catholic associations. “Let me warn you not to be alarmed at my adoption by the priesthood. My adoption is and will be solely political and charitable. As this morning I have reclaimed a would-be pervert, so shall I continue steadfastly to

uphold the doctrine and continue in the faith of that holy Church of which you are a Minister and I a loyal soldier, so long as the Heavenly Light is not further illuminated to mortal eyes. If you accede to me, and I am convinced you will, I shall probably sometimes be suspected of erroneous tendencies. Yet heed not the calumny ; you will know it is but for the principle of legislating for the majority and for the country's good, that I advocate this or that. I now leave my case in your hands. Its urgency you will perceive in the present condition of affairs, its merits and demerits. Balance the one against the other, with me admit the superior weight of the pros, and you will yet see me wield the staff of office."

The reply was sufficiently distinct : " Nothing will induce me to furnish you with one pound to help you." The father's refusal was tempered with advice so sound and kindly that the son wished it to be placed on record, but the MS. appears to have been mislaid. The main point appears to have been that the young man did not know his own mind, and had taken up these views under external influence. Unquestionably this was a true reading of the case, and the would-be M.P. good-humouredly acquiesced in the disappointment. There is, indeed, no evidence in his letters or writings to suggest that at this age (he was only twenty-four) he had begun to think seriously about politics except as leading to a public career.

This—the making of a career—was the one pre-occupation of his indefatigable spirit. The ambition was not purely or even mainly selfish. From his

actions as well as his correspondence it is clear that his first thought was to relieve his parents of the expense to which he was still putting them, repay what they had spent upon his education, and earn fresh honours for an old and distinguished family. These may not be the highest of human motives, but if none worse were known amongst the men who undertake to guide the destinies of nations the world would be a very different place to live in.

Vincent's impulsive way of flying off at a tangent was illustrated in May, 1873, by the manner in which he brought about his call to the Bar. He had obtained, not without difficulty, three days' leave from Ireland in order to deliver a lecture (on the Austrian Army) at the United Service Institute, which was attended by his father and mother. Afterwards he ran off to visit a friend in the Temple, where he heard that an examination would be held next day for the admission of students. At dinner that evening he asked his father whether he might go in for it. Laughingly the permission was given. At the time Vincent did not know what were the subjects of examination. The standard, he found next day, was not exacting—translation from Cæsar and a history paper. With the help of his Italian he went boldly at the Latin—the language for which he had so often been “handed” at Westminster—and eventually was complimented on his scholarship; while the history questions he floored quite easily. The other eight candidates were spun. The one successful student went straight off to the sub-treasurer's office in the Inner Temple, wrote a cheque for the fees, and the same evening ate his first

dinner in the Hall. Forthwith he sent in his papers, and on July 14 was gazetted out, receiving the £450 paid for his commission.

If it had been possible for him to join the Guards and live in London he would not have left the Army, but for some time he had felt that with his regiment there was no prospect of promotion. After five years' service he was still junior lieutenant, and would have to wait ten years at least for his company. From entrance to the Staff College his unskilfulness in drawing—then almost an essential subject—he felt debarred him. It was not, however, without keen regret that he gave up the Army as a profession. Merely as a training for a young man wishing to go into public life he considered it superior to the University, besides being—in normal cases—much cheaper. Although he owed nothing to the regiment in regard to self-advancement, he had formed among the officers several warm friendships, and he proved his continuing attachment to it by the active part which he took almost to the end of his life in promoting the annual dinner. For a great many years he acted as secretary to the annual regimental dinner of the Welsh Fusiliers, and took care that the young officers should have a warm welcome from their elders, and thus encouraged a great “*esprit de corps*.”

## CHAPTER IV

### TRAVEL, THE BAR, THE PRESS

**A**LTHOUGH Vincent was thoroughly in earnest about following the Law as a profession, he determined, wisely enough, to see a little more of the world before he settled down to legal study. In order to perfect himself in Russian he started for Moscow, where he stayed for several months. Amongst his friends there may be mentioned Mr. Leslie, British Vice-Consul and manager of the English gasworks, who often entertained Madame Adelina Patti during her visits to Russia. He was also taken up by the Governor-General, Prince Vladimir Andrevitch Dolgorouski, who asked him one day whether he had ever seen the City's Fire Brigade. No? Then I will have a review. Forthwith he telegraphed for every fire-engine and escape to be instantly at Government House!

On returning to London Vincent began reading for the Bar examination with another officer turned lawyer—Colonel G. F. Blake, Deputy-Judge Advocate, who had an “exceedingly good system.” He packed all the essential information into the form of written questions and answers. These the young jurisprudent would learn by heart and so “pass with flying colours.” In order to obtain some knowledge of legal practice,

Vincent went into the chambers of Mr. J. H. Baylis (afterwards Judge of the Liverpool Court of Passage) and became his 146th pupil. Hardly had he become tolerably expert in drawing pleadings than the beautiful art, with all its technical absurdities, was swept away by the Judicature Act of 1875.

Meantime, by way of keeping in touch with journalism, Vincent worked regularly for the *Bombay Gazette* as its military correspondent in London. In the summer vacation he made a journey through Servia (already mobilising for revolt) and Roumania to Constantinople. In the Turkish capital he studied the language for several hours in the day, and mixed freely in the society, especially at the Embassy, then held by Sir Henry Eliot. He made the acquaintance also of Hobart Pasha, commander of the Turkish Fleet; General Ignatieff, the famous diplomatist; and Hussein Ali Pasha, Minister of War to the Sultan Abdul Aziz, who frequently invited his attendances at his palace fifteen miles up the Bosphorus on the Asiatic shore. The worst of these otherwise interesting invitations was that the time fixed was generally five or six in the morning, so that a start had to be made about three a.m. Relations between Great Britain and Russia were gradually becoming worse and worse; most of the persons best qualified to form an opinion held that war must now come, and Vincent, never missing a chance, set to work upon an Anglo-Russian-Turkish Military Vocabulary and Dialogues "for the use of armies in the field." The work perished still-born, owing to Lord Beaconsfield having preserved the peace of Europe.

Passing in October from Turkey to Greece, Vincent, with that good fortune which seldom deserts the keen and alert, found himself at the Piræus just when the *Serapis* came into port with the Prince of Wales (King Edward) on board, *en route* for India. He still entertained some hope that Lord Northbrook, the Governor-General, might remember his promise of a post at Calcutta; it might have been his chance of a life nor could he arrive under better auspices than in the Prince of Wales' *suite*. In letters written at this time to his father he debated with himself, and asks to be advised, whether it would be good policy to plunge into an Indian career. Evidently he was rather afraid of a good offer being made to him—one that he could not well refuse—for he had no desire to expatriate himself and finally abandon his cherished hope of getting into Parliament. Whatever might have been the outcome of his balancing motives, the Indian idea was brought to an end by a sharp attack of typhoid, which developed itself almost immediately after his arrival at the Villa Flora, Cannes.

On returning to England, in January, 1876, being called to the Bar, he made use of his recent travels in the East for a lecture at the United Service Institution on the Turkish Army and the military aspects of the Eastern question. Next, he had to establish his position in the Auxiliary Forces. On retiring from the Royal Welsh Fusiliers he had no idea of saying a permanent good-bye to soldiering. He had been given a captaincy in the Royal Berks Militia, but was gazetted out at the end of November, 1875, to be appointed next month Lieut.-Colonel of the 40th

Middlesex or Central London Rangers. At the age of twenty-six he had obtained command of a Volunteer battalion, and from this date he never wavered in his enthusiastic devotion to the force which has now been transformed into the Territorial Army. The regiment which he now took under his charge was in a bad state—discipline was lax, officers lacking, finances in disorder. In a short time, by ruthlessly weeding out inefficient officers and overhauling the finances, the new commanding officer had put a new face on affairs, and the regiment, as we shall see, acquired a good reputation amongst the Metropolitan Volunteers.

Amongst solicitors Vincent had few acquaintances, and he was at first dismayed at the number of highly qualified young barristers whom he saw waiting—and vainly waiting—for briefs. With no slight audacity, however, he selected for his personal attack that reputedly close corporation the Divorce, Admiralty, and Probate Division. The seniors, he observed, were well advanced in years, while of coming-in juniors there was a certain dearth. For a year he was in chambers with Mr. Bayford, by whom he was kept hard at work, either in attendance in court or in drawing petitions and defences. His experience in that not very attractive work—though it may also have been prompted by his already marked appreciation of French social life—led him to make an interesting observation. Eight of ten marriages which had ended unhappily, he noted, had been made against the wish of the parents on one side or the other. This would seem to show (argued the young philosopher) that third parties are better judges of a



marriage than the young people themselves—the basis of the French custom of which the parental consent is an essential preliminary. It cannot be said, however, that Vincent's opinion is confirmed by that of other lawyers experienced in divorce practice. One great judge, with a turn for social epigram, observed that he would be thrown out of work were it not for drink in the lower and music in the upper and middle classes.

Vincent, then, was busily employed in legal practice, though as a rule without remuneration. He would "devil" for anybody, and his name was nearly every day in the law reports as apparently connected with some case. He was constantly making motions in court or before the registrar, and dealing with witnesses. There was, he thought, a fair prospect, as vacancies arose in the Division, of his building up a rival practice. Several solicitors told Mr. Bayford or his clerk that they meant to employ the assiduous "devil." To keep them in this desirable frame of mind he began to compile a handbook on the Law of Divorce and Judicial Separation. This was another of his projected publications that never saw the light. On leaving the P. D. and A. Division in the summer of 1876, and beginning to go the South Eastern Circuit, he handed over to a friend the uncompleted manuscript. On circuit he got a fair amount of work—still unpaid—and on one day at Maidstone held no less than five briefs. Whether he had in him the makings of an advocate it is impossible to say—so diverse are the qualities that go to forensic success, and so apparently unsuited

for verdict-getting are some of the men who make large incomes. He shared one of the experiences but few young barristers escape. He tells the story against himself. In defending a prisoner charged with a crime to which a minimum penalty is attached, he was much disconcerted in his speech to the jury by the demeanour of the Judge. "My kind friend Baron Huddleston, the Judge of Assize, with whom I had dined the previous night, shook his head continually as if wholly disapproving of the line I was taking. The more eloquent I became the more his head shook, and so I had to cut myself short. He summed up dead against me and the unfortunate prisoner was convicted. Although I often saw 'The Last of the Barons' afterwards, and stayed with him and Lady Diana at The Grange on Ascot Heath, he never referred to the incident, and I was too frightened to ask him what I had done wrong."

Not satisfied with the conventional methods of preparing at the English Bar for professional advancement, Vincent took steps in 1877 to qualify for admission as a French advocate, in order to qualify himself for judicial commissions abroad. Nevertheless he was soon to relinquish Law as previously he had abandoned the Army. Even in 1876 his thoughts had returned lovingly to the hopes of distinction as a War Correspondent, and he had written to Mr. Edward Levy-Lawson (Lord Burnham) to place his services at the disposal of the *Daily Telegraph* in the event of hostilities breaking out. The reply was delayed, as there was still reason to hope that the great conflict

might be averted between Russia and Turkey. Early in May, 1877, it was decided to send Vincent out as correspondent at the Russian headquarters—£500 down, £300 a month, and all expenses. At once he wrote in exultant terms to his father, adding as a postscript: "I am going to try to insure my life for £6000, so as to pay for my education which has got me this, if anything happens."

There was, however, some doubt before he started, whether the Russian authorities would allow foreign correspondents with the army. A negative decision was said to have been delivered in St. Petersburg, but the *Daily Telegraph* suggested that he should make a personal appeal to the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaivitch, brother of the Emperor, under whom the army of the Danube was being organised at Kishineff.<sup>1</sup> On arrival, though courteously received, Vincent was pledged not to write messages or telegraph until permission had been given and the river crossed. He filled up the idle time by visiting Odessa and watching the trial trips of the Popoffka circular ships, of which much had been expected. Other correspondents with the Russian army were Mr. Archibald Forbes and Mr. Hilary Skinner, for the *Daily News*. They were not an over-cordial party, we read in the diary. Forbes, to whose energy and talents Vincent

<sup>1</sup> Kishineff was afterwards the scene of atrocious crimes against the Jews. That the outbreak of the Russian peasants against their white neighbours was not altogether unaccountable may be gathered from Vincent's remark in 1877 that the Jewish community was guilty of awful depravity. "Fathers would openly offer their children for immoral purposes, and force their way and their proposals into the hotel, even into one's room, until, besides locking the door and ignoring repeated knocks, a man was specially stationed to keep them away.

pays a warm and well-justified tribute, was jealous of a rival who could converse at ease with the Russians of all ranks and read the official orders and the newspapers. "Forbes was an extraordinary man. He never seemed to tire. He could work all day and sit up all night. He could be everywhere in a battle, and then ride twenty or thirty miles to a telegraph to get his message off. No one had so graphic a style. His readers felt that they themselves were spectators of what he described. I asked him how he did it. He said he kept on writing during the whole course of an engagement. He always tried to get upon a hill, the nearer to the opposing force the better, and there, lying flat, he would write what he saw in a small penny note-book exactly as he wanted to wire it, so that at the end of the day he had only to present the note-book at the telegraph office. Thus he often gained two or three hours, and not seldom an entire day, over colleagues who had to go to their quarters and write out their despatches deliberately. Of course this Forbes' system would not be practicable with such censoring as took place during the South African War by totally inexperienced young gentlemen, who were not considered fit for anything else, and who were often very difficult to find. The Colonel on the staff who acted as the Russian Censor was a most courteous and able man. At five o'clock every evening he saw all the correspondents together, and read out in French any information which could be made public. This pleased everybody, and gave all an equal chance. Forbes was a man of great stature, and must have ridden at least sixteen stone. Although 'he did himself well' in every other respect,

he was very abstemious as a rule in drink, confining himself generally to oceans of soda-water. It was evident that no constitution could stand the enormous strain to which he subjected it, and for some years before he died he was a confirmed invalid."

In spite of official politeness, Vincent was soon informed that he would not be allowed to cross the Danube into the Russian army. The Censor confessed that one of the reasons for the decision was Vincent's knowledge of Russian. Another was that his previous writings had indicated sympathy with the Turks. It was no use to argue, and he was informed that the next morning at nine o'clock a conveyance would be at his disposal for the railway in the Carpathian Mountains. Night and day he travelled back to London, and when he arrived in Fleet Street he had with him a written account of the Russian army and its preparations. It was resolved to print the whole story (about eleven columns) in a single issue. Needless to add, it was quoted in every important Continental newspaper, and brought great credit to the *Daily Telegraph* and its correspondent. It was well worth the £800 it had cost, so the editor said. Vincent became quite a personage in London, both for the merit of his work and the lavish scale of the recompense.

Between the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief there was a certain rivalry for official precedence, so that Vincent was in some doubt as to which of the great men should be given priority. He decided in favour of the politician (Mr. G. Hardy, to whom he gave a far more detailed account of the

Russian army than he could put into print. Mr. Hardy was deeply interested. Next came the Duke's turn. "God bless my soul," he exclaimed, "this is very important. I will go and tell the Secretary of State." He did not heed, or perhaps did not hear Vincent's mumbled explanation. But when half an hour later he returned it was with a good-humoured laugh instead of the storm of expletives which had been expected.

All this time, of course, the Bar had been neglected, and Vincent confesses that he had already grown a little sick of the Temple, especially when he came across barristers' and solicitors' clerks, members of his Volunteer regiment, who knew that, except for his devilling, he was a briefless barrister. Moreover, his greatly advertised success as a war correspondent stood against him with the dispensers of work, since they were prone to think that he was not serious about the Law.

[He was therefore quite ready for another change of profession, and it was not long in coming. One of the most remarkable traits in his character was his versatility. He does not seem to have been conscious that this was not a universal gift, for he once expressed to a friend the opinion that everyone ought to change their profession every five years!]

## CHAPTER V

### DIRECTOR OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

FOR several years past the management of the Detective Department at Scotland Yard had failed to give satisfaction. But when four of the principal Inspectors had been charged and convicted in regard to the so-called Turf Fraud Scandals, it was evident that a radical change should be carried out. An end must be put to police complicity and black-mailing. The Home Secretary (Cross) appointed a small departmental committee—his Under-Secretary Sir Henry Selwyn Ibbetson, Col. the Hon. W. Fielding, Mr. J. Marle, q.c., and Mr. Overend, q.c.—to investigate and report. At once Vincent saw an opportunity. Already he knew something of police administration in France, Germany, Austria and Russia. On his own responsibility he went over to Paris, and on the spot, with the assistance of the Prefect and his officers, drafted an exhaustive yet fairly brief report on the organisation of the French detective system. He called his brother Edgar into consultation, and eighteen times re-wrote the text, being resolved that in form and substance it should be made as good as possible. This was precisely the sort of information which the committee required, did not possess, and could not easily obtain. From the paragraphs printed

below—those which have not passed out of date—it will be seen that the unpretentious document was a model of concise and well-arranged statements :

1. The Paris police may be regarded as consisting of three great departments.

(a) Political ; (b) Civil ; (c) Criminal.

2. The superior control is vested absolutely in the Préfet de Police—at this moment M. Voisin. He is appointed by the Government of the day, and frequently changes with the Ministry. His power is great ; his resources practically unlimited. Besides maintaining a general direction over all the branches of the Préfecture, he has a large staff of secret agents drawn from every class of society. Their names are known only to the Préfet, and they are remunerated from funds, as to the disposal of which no account is publicly rendered.

3. The Political Department is entirely in the hands of the Préfet and his political Secretary.

4. The Civil Department consists of two divisions and three special services.

(a) The so-called “Second Division,” on which devolves the supervision of hackney carriages, public markets, slaughter-houses, asylums for the insane, etc., in which duty about two hundred Inspectors (the designation of all Police Agents not wearing uniform) are employed.

(b) The “Third Division,” which is responsible for the offices and stations.



- (c) The "Service des Mœurs," employing sixty Inspectors in the control of prostitution and the regulation of public morality.
- (d) The "Service des Garnis," consisting of 124 Inspectors, supervising the 12,000 hotels and lodging-houses.
- (e) The "Service des Recherches," consisting of five brigades of about fifty Inspectors each, who conduct investigations of various kinds on behalf of families and individuals, but only on the formal demand of an administrative branch of the Préfecture, and in no case upon the mere requisition of the individual interested.

These special services are all under the control of the Chief of the Municipal Police.

5. The Criminal Department consists of :—

- (a) The so-called First Division.
- (b) The Municipal Police.
- (c) The Police de Sureté.
- (d) The Contrôle.

6. The First Division corresponds in some measure to the department of the Solicitor to the Treasury. It is responsible for the administrative duties of Justice, the bringing of prisoners to trial, the preparation of evidence, and extradition.

This matter of extradition now occupies the close attention of the French authorities, and I have been requested by the Préfet de Police to represent as far as possible for one not holding an official position the desire of the Republic to arrive at a better understanding on the subject with Great Britain. With

the extradition Secretary I have minutely studied the question, and from enquiries in Germany, Italy, and Belgium have reason to believe that the effects of French reciprocity with those countries are beneficial.

7. The Municipal Police numbers twenty officers de Paix, 748 Inspectors, 5203 Gardiens. The City is divided into twenty Police Arrondissements, connected with each other and the Préfecture by private telegraph. To every arrondissement is assigned an Officier de Paix, who has under his orders an average of thirty-seven Inspectors and 260 men.

The latter are usually ex-non-Commissioned officers of the Army. The educational knowledge of the Gardiens is low, and their physique also much below par. The pay is only fair, but a pension is obtainable after twenty-five years' service.

8. In each arrondissement there is a Commissaire de Police, who is directly responsible to the Préfet. Every individual taken into custody is charged before the Commissaire of the district, who decides on his release or detention. He draws up a *procès verbal* of the facts for the information of the Chef du Parquet du Procureur de la République, the functionary responsible for the after conduct of the proceedings.

The independent position of the Commissaires in relation to the Police is a guarantee, it is claimed, against abuse of power.

9. The Police de Sureté is sometimes designated as the branch of the Paris Police corresponding to the Detective Department at Scotland Yard. This

is not strictly accurate. The operation of the latter usually commences after the crime has been committed. The Police de Sureté, on the other hand, is engaged in the prevention of crime as well as in the pursuit of the criminal. It combines the duties of the Detective Department and those of the Divisional Detectives of the London system.

It was not purely with the object of assisting the committee in their labour that Vincent put himself to all this trouble. He had seen that an important new post would be created, and was determined to get it. Also he realised that more importance would be attached to legal than military attainments. In collecting testimonials, therefore, he relied chiefly on friends who could speak of his work as a barrister. His practice, as we have seen, had not been lucrative, nor was it of long standing. But it had been varied and of the kind that would probably be useful at Scotland Yard. He was so fortunate as to obtain a warm commendation from the Attorney-General, Sir John Holker, one of the most successful verdict-getters in the history of the English Bar.

“You have had a thorough military training,” wrote Sir John; “you have been in practice at the Bar for some years. To my knowledge you are a sound lawyer, and you are especially well-versed in the Criminal Law and the practice of Criminal Courts. I may add that you have acquired a knowledge not only of the laws of this country, but of other States, a knowledge which might prove of great advantage in extradition cases.”

"You have an intimate acquaintance with the European systems of Police, and you have the great advantage which is afforded by the command of several languages, viz. French, German, Russian, and Italian."

"To the qualifications I have enumerated I may add others of greater importance. They are these: You are a man of great energy and determination of character and, I need hardly add, of the highest honour."

"Having said this much I shall have stated enough to convince any reasonable mind that I am fully justified in the opinion I have expressed respecting your fitness for the post in question."

With Sir John (be it explained) Vincent had but a slight personal acquaintance. In contrast with his letter may be quoted one from a staunch friend, Napier Sturt, who wrote with characteristic vigour to Mr. Cross:

"I desire to state my humble opinion that no one on God's earth would be more competent to fill any new appointment in the administration of the police than my trusty friend Vincent, of whose great ability, thorough truthfulness and singleness of purpose from long experience I am well aware. I entertain of him a very high opinion, in fact I cannot speak too highly. I have had many opportunities of noting his special talents. He has spent his life in improving his mind. He knows many languages. He is discerning and reliable. What more do you want? True, he is young, but this is a failing which cures itself day by

day. If at his age he is not to be trusted, he will not be fit for a responsible position four or five years hence. 'Pass him over and you will live to regret it' is the prophecy of

"Yours ever sincerely,

"C. NAPIER STURT."

Other testimonials came from Sir J. Marle, q.c., and Mr. Overend, q.c. (members of the Departmental Committee), Sergeant Parry, Sir William Hardman (Chairman of the Surrey Sessions), Mr. Inderwick, q.c., and Mr. Bayford (of the Probate, Admiralty, and Divorce Division), Chancellor Tristram, Mr. Baylis, q.c., and Colonel Blake (Deputy Judge-Advocate of the Royal Marines). With all these more or less distinguished lawyers Vincent, in his short career at the Bar, had been brought into business relations of one sort or another. Though it is, of course, unreasonable to measure testimonials by the standard applied to sworn evidence, it is certain that these honourable and successful men would not so cordially have recommended a candidate in whose capacity they did not feel genuine confidence. This is a point which has to be brought out, because after Vincent had been selected for the much coveted position it was freely asserted that he was nothing of a lawyer, and owed the appointment to favouritism. It was his own opinion that he owed it to the report on the Paris Police. Anyhow, it may be safely asserted that none of the unsuccessful applicants had qualified himself by a sounder or more timely bit of work. It was the more effective because at that time the French detectives enjoyed in this country a somewhat exaggerated

reputation for efficiency, and the general opinion was that the London system should be remodelled on the lines of Paris.

Vincent was not satisfied with collecting testimonials and enclosing them in a bare covering letter. More than twenty times did he cast and recast his application. In due course he was invited to present himself at the Home Office, where he underwent a long examination at the hands of Sir Henry Selwyn Ibbetson (Lord Rookwood), who finally recommended him to Mr. Cross. The selection made in due course, the name of the office had to be settled. In order as far as possible to get rid of the uncanny associations connected with the word detective, it was decided that Vincent should be called Director of Criminal Investigations. The salary (at his suggestion) was fixed at that of an assistant commissaire of police—£1100 a year. He was then introduced to the Home Secretary, who forthwith signed a memorandum defining the Director's position. His only official superior at Scotland Yard would be the Chief Commissioner. He was to be known as barrister-at-law, not as Colonel, since the faults of the superseded system was popularly attributed to the semi-military sub-officials in Scotland Yard. Officially the new Director was enjoined in conducting his separate and independent department, to exhibit patience and tact. Unofficially, Mr. Cross told him to come and see him whenever he liked, to report direct to the Home Office, and not pay too much attention to what was said of him either by the Chief Commissioner, or anyone else at Scotland Yard.



C. E. HOWARD VINCENT

"DIRECTEUR DES AFFAIRES CRIMINELLES DE LA POLICE MÉTRO-  
POLITAINE DE LONDRES; MEMBRE DE LA FACULTÉ DE DROIT ET  
DE LA SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE DES PRISONS DE PARIS"—AND YET

When there's practical detection to be done,  
To be done,  
This Director's lot is not a bappy one,  
Happy one.

*By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch," July 16, 1881*





Honourable as Vincent's new position was, it was not free from embarrassments. Nominally he was subordinate to the Chief Commissioner, but practically was told to act independently. Yet the appointment was not statutory, nor was he given disciplinary power over his staff. Sir Robert Anderson, in *The Lighter Side of the Official Life*, declared roundly that nobody but Vincent could have worked successfully in so ambiguous a position. Besides tact and good temper, the new Director must be a man of rare persistency. These were qualities of which Vincent had already proved himself possessed, and on them he had to rely. In 1878 the Conservative Government was not strong in the country, and Mr. Cross was unwilling to run the risks of proposing in the House of Commons a Bill that would invite keen debate.

On the whole Vincent's appointment was well received in the Press, but there were some newspapers which argued, not without reason, that a man of longer or more direct experience should have been discovered, while in two or three a dead set was made against the new Director, to be kept up so long as he held office. He does not appear to have been ruffled by the hostile comments, even when they were highly personal. They were duly cut out, dated, and pasted in his journals; occasionally he has written by the side a correction as to some matter of fact, but otherwise he seems to have collected them as cheerfully as those which referred only to his zeal and capacity. This coolness of temper he maintained throughout his public career. Keenly relishing praise and not insensitive

to blame, he never betrayed indignation or nourished resentment. Two qualities, it has been said, are essential to success in English public life. The first is indifference to public criticism; the second is the power to drink champagne without being upset next morning. The first condition was fulfilled by Vincent; the second was evaded because, in spite of his exploits at the Warsaw mess-table, he was rigidly abstemious. He soon blossomed out as a host, and his little dinner at his house in Ebury Street to distinguished friends soon became famous in the social world. This was almost the only form of relaxation which at this time he permitted himself, and it could be indulged without cutting his communication with the night-and-day work of his department.

“The system prevailing as regards the Assistant-Commissioners was,” writes Vincent, “peculiar. Instead of being placed in charge of specific departments, they were on duty in alternative months, and having very different views on things often upset one another’s decisions. They were by no means favourable to the new order of things, which took all criminal matters completely out of their hands, and to prevent any relapse I never left my post for a single day for three years.”

Owing to the disappearance in disgrace of several important members of the detective force the Director was short-handed. Like Sir Robert Anderson, he duly recognised the value of the late Chief Superintendent Williamson’s long service, and found him a

most able and zealous assistant. But it was necessary to reorganise a staff of contented and capable officers. For this purpose he drafted a scheme of increased pay and regularised promotion. This, before submitting it to the Home Secretary, he tactfully, so he thought, took to Sir Edmund Henderson, the Chief Commissioner. Having obtained his official superior's endorsement he went on to Mr. Cross, who said sharply, "I thought I told you to act upon your own judgment, not the Chief Commissioner's."

In a short time Vincent got together a good set of officers, but it was at the cost of going personally through all the correspondence of the department, reading all the reports and giving all the orders. He was at his office from nine in the morning to seven in the evening, besides doing much work at home, and running continuously at the call of the telephone, then an entirely new mode of communication. All the responsibility of the department was centred upon the head, and his subordinates were instructed to consult freely with him. This was a state of things that might go on for a few months or even a few years. Clearly it could not be permanent. It was, no doubt, a weakness in Vincent's method of work that, like most young administrators, he wished to do everything himself, and did not easily reconcile himself to the necessity of delegation. He possessed a remarkable memory, and could, he boasted, carry in his head the details of the six hundred or seven hundred cases that might be simultaneously dealt with at Scotland Yard.

If in his bearing towards official chiefs the Director

had to practise tact, he needed patience to overcome, amongst subordinates, the tacit resistance which is always offered to a new system. His guiding rule was to make things hum, and sometimes, as he confesses, his zeal outran discretion. A few days after he had entered upon his work a heavy case of forgery was reported between six and seven in the evening. "Have every station carefully watched," he exclaimed, "and every outgoing boat." "What will be the good of that, sir?" respectfully inquired Williamson. Vincent at once realised the uselessness and difficulty of his idea. Police work in England consists not merely of finding out the guilty, but also of discovering *prima facie* evidence to justify his arrest.

Though Mr. Cross apparently felt no active personal interest in the re-organisation at Scotland Yard, leaving the superintendence to Sir Henry Selwyn Ibbetson, he backed up Vincent in all measures requiring his authority. Circulars were at once issued to the magistrates and police authorities throughout the United Kingdom, courteously suggesting co-operation between the local police forces and the detective force in London. But a check was administered to Vincent's reforming energy as soon as he touched upon the prerogative of another Government officer. Having imported to Scotland Yard an accomplished polyglot Scotchman as confidential clerk, he entered into direct and immediate communication with the chiefs of foreign police forces. The old plan had been to act in such cases through the Foreign Office—often a matter of two or three weeks' delay—but here the Foreign Office, or some pretentious clerk in

it, interposed, and Mr. Cross, under Foreign Office stimulus, indited the following confidential letter to the Director of Criminal Investigations. It may be worth citation in full, showing the difficulties under which public business is conducted :

“ WHITEHALL,

“ *14th September, 1878.*

“ Sir,

“ Mr. Secretary Cross has had under his consideration the question if direct demands for the arrest of individuals made by the police of one country to the police of another country, in connection with the circular letter which you addressed to the foreign police authorities on 1st August last.

“ This question was brought specially under the notice of the Secretary of State in 1873, and after careful consideration and communication with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and with the Chief Magistrate, it was laid down that no application for arrest should be made except through the Foreign Office, and that in order to guarantee application for arrest from abroad, coming by telegram, they should be required to come through the Diplomatic Representative of the country applying.

“ Mr. Cross is of opinion that this practice is the best and safest, and he cannot sanction any deviation from it.

“ He requests, therefore, that your Circular to the Foreign Police may be modified, and that it may be distinctly understood that while direct communication between yourself and Foreign Police Authorities for

the *purposes of information* is unobjectionable, all demands for arrest, whether by telegram or otherwise, must be made through the Diplomatic channel and the Foreign Office, and that all demands for arrest on the part of the English Police must be sent to the Secretary of State for transmission to the competent authorities abroad through the Foreign Office.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ A. F. O. LIDDELL.”

By vague assurances from the Home Office as to the future applications for arrests, the question was disposed of—thanks, in no small degree, to the tact and judgment displayed by Sir Adolphus Liddell.

As an example of the miscellaneous duties piled upon the new official may be quoted a brief report, submitted by Vincent, in answer to Queen Victoria's enquiries as to Social Democracy in London. This was one of his first duties.

“ There exist among the foreign colonies established in London several clubs which, affording relief and succour to the needy and forlorn, offer at the same time congenial and sympathetic society to those in employment. For these reasons large numbers are enrolled. Most of these clubs meet in the parlour of some public-house or other, once, twice, or three times a week. They smoke, drink, and sing. Not unfrequently too are politics discussed with some warmth, but especially those causes—civil or military—which have brought about the expatriation. But without exception these clubs possess neither individual power

nor collective force. The persons composing them have not the means to carry out quixotic ideas, nor sufficient influence or status to cause their adoption by others. It is well to bear this in mind, and it is desirable not to assign to these humble gatherings a fictitious importance which they are far from aspiring to of their own mere motion. How insignificant, in very truth, are the majority of these clubs, is well illustrated by the most ambitious of them all—the ‘German Working Men’s Communistic Association.’

“It is divided into two sections: the first meeting in Marshall Street, under the presidency of one Zadeck; the second in the City Road, under Gaudeck, a tailor.

“Zadeck, although but an ill-educated assistant in an humble eating-house, and but a youth of twenty-two, has certainly attained some notoriety by means of offensive advertisements in divers radical journals in France and Austria.

“Gaudeck is beneath notice.

“To either section belong from twenty to thirty artisans and others, including many tailors. They indulge in quaint signs and have divers mysterious forms, but their adoption is far from original and possess no genuine signification.

“In short, although it is desirable to keep pace with any unexpected growth, or unlooked for power, which this club or others may attain, I am clearly not of opinion that any serious conspiracy is on foot, and that there is at present any organisation whereof the acts are likely to be such as to cause the slightest apprehension or alarm.”

Scotland Yard was constantly pressed to show increased vigilance in watching anarchists by the representatives of various foreign Governments, especially by Vincent's friend, Count Münster, on behalf of Berlin. They believed that London was the centre of plots for the assassination of sovereigns, and part of Vincent's duty was to keep them reassured as to our methods of observation and precaution. The difficulty was that the British public was very jealous of action resembling espionage, but on the other hand indulged in panic if any crime occurred without the perpetrators being instantly arrested. In the House of Commons certain members were always on the pounce for police action which they could use as an indictment of the Home Office. Meantime, foreign statesmen could not grasp the British principle of permitting ventilation of the wildest theories so long as the speakers did not proceed to put them into practice. Vincent, therefore, lived under a cross-fire of alternating censure. He had to save his political Chief from parliamentary interrogation and simultaneously keep foreign Ministers reassured.

The courage of persons whose lives have never been attempted or even threatened is very different from that of those who have gone several times perhaps through the ordeal. Even Queen Victoria, so Vincent tells, who to all appearances was the most impassive of sovereigns, was specially nervous about Constitution Hill, because it was there in 1850 that she was attacked by Robert Pate on leaving Cambridge House. The visit of foreign monarchs and princes put a sharp strain on Scotland Yard—especially the visit of the Crown Prince of Germany (Frederick III)



in the spring of 1879. His Government had been informed—and its information was borne out in London—that a certain *Société de la Mort* had pledged itself to his murder. “The great public ceremonials were comparatively easy to protect, but there was particular danger in a visit to a certain German Athenæum in Mortimer Street. The day was the anniversary of the executions in Berlin in 1848, and the Socialists were greatly excited. It was therefore carried out ten minutes in advance of the advertised time—and to this was in all probability owing His Imperial Majesty’s escape. A dangerous man, under close observation, only arrived at the exit to find that the Crown Prince had already left. I was heartily glad, however, when His Imperial Majesty’s visit was over. The German Government was very appreciative of the protection afforded in England, and sent £50 to the officers engaged.”

The Belgian Minister, M. Van de Velde, wished to see for himself something of Socialist doings, and, after dining with Vincent, went with him to a meeting at the Hall of Science in Old Street, City Road. “My diplomatic friend looked for all the world like a most advanced Socialist. I just wore a pea-jacket and a pot hat, as any disguise would have been awkward had I been recognised. Van de Velde went in first to reconnoitre, coming back to say it looked fearfully rough, and that he thought I ran a great risk, and that it would be more prudent for him to separate from me. I agreed, and after a bit I went in with hat slouched over my eyes and upturned collar. I kept near the door, and one of my own Inspectors there on duty

passed close to me without recognising me. Most, the editor of *Freiheit* made an extremely violent speech, but the audience was by no means unanimous, although the theme—the expulsion of the Socialists and their families from Germany—was a popular one.”

A good deal of unnecessary trouble was given at Scotland Yard by incorrect though *bona fide* information. Just before the Berlin Congress, for instance, when feeling ran high between Great Britain and Russia, Vincent received innumerable denunciations of supposed Russian spies. On one occasion he was waited upon by a soi-disant member of the Russian secret police, who offered to point out the Russian agents in London. “I found out at once that he was an impostor, and would have nothing to do with him. He thereupon wrote a plausible letter to Lord Beaconsfield, who directed me to see him again. I did so, and in reply to my inquiry if he could give me any *temoignage de bonne foi*, he said he was in a position to supply at once the names of the two principal Russian agents in England—Mr. Herbert and a Lieutenant Armit who had achieved some notoriety. It was too ludicrous. I asked him why he had written to the Prime Minister. He denied it until I produced his letter. He then said that he preferred dealing ‘*avec un Premier Ministre qu’avec un simple Directeur de Police.*’”

In order to carry out the international part of his work, it was obviously essential for Vincent to maintain close relations with the chiefs of foreign police forces, and with M. Lepine, Chief of the French Police, whom he calls the greatest of policemen, he

was very intimate. But with meetings and arrangements of this kind the Secretary of State preferred to have no acquaintance. The ignorance made his position easier in the House of Commons. On the other hand, so long as Vincent kept out of scrapes, he does not seem to have had anything to fear from his political chiefs, while he frequently expresses personal obligation for the hand they gave him, both to Sir Henry Selwyn Ibbetson and Sir Matthew White Ridley.

It is, perhaps, necessary to note in passing that in August, 1878, the jealousy between the uniformed detective branch which Vincent was specially anxious to allay, nearly came to a head. The advantages conferred on the plainclothes men under Vincent's recommendations led to something like a mutiny in one division, where the superintendent was an able but rather cross-grained man. Handbills were circulated amongst the sergeants and constables convening a monster meeting. Vincent, of course, had no authority to interfere, but hit upon some pretext for summoning the leader of the disaffection. He managed to talk him over quietly, and the Chief Commissioner then issued an order denouncing the method of agitation, but promising that a hearing would be given to all reasonable complaints urged in a proper manner. The trouble having passed away, a further Committee of Inquiry was appointed under Sir M. White Ridley. An attempt was made to promote a general scheme of reorganisation, but the Home Secretary did not think it advisable to take action, and the whole question, in the usual official manner, was again postponed.

## CHAPTER VI

### AT SCOTLAND YARD

“MY first sensational case,” writes Vincent, “came from Burton Crescent in December, 1878. An old woman was murdered in her kitchen—no one else being in the house, and nothing whatever stolen. Circumstances pointed strongly to a charwoman she occasionally employed, and she was arrested. But it was not possible to carry the case further. In discharging her, after several remands, the magistrate, Mr. Flowers, said: ‘I fully agree with what Mr. Poland has said respecting the exertions of the police. So far as they possibly could, they have investigated this matter and endeavoured to bring to justice the guilty person. Although there are many facts pointing to the prisoner as being that person, I am not of opinion that they are such as to justify me in placing you on your trial. That the police were right in the step they have taken, nobody who has read the facts can for a moment doubt. They have only done their duty.’ There was little doubt really about the case. The eldest son of the deceased came shortly afterwards to see me and express his view and the gratitude of the family for the labours of the police. He wanted to find a woman to get into her confidence, but to this I could not lend myself. In the absence

of any power of interrogation or anything being taken, it is often impossible in England to obtain a conviction, however strong the circumstantial evidence. In France and elsewhere, the greater powers of the police are of incalculable assistance.

“Prisoners are repeatedly questioned in private, and only recently have been entitled to the assistance of counsel at such interrogation, crimes are reconstituted, and they can be kept under preventive arrest for an unlimited period. No one would wish to establish such a course of procedure in England, although something analogous works exceedingly well in Scotland; but its absence and the accompanying occasional failure of Justice is the price paid for English freedom.

“Another case was that of the mutilated female body found in the Thames without any possible clue to identity. Examination shows that they had been boiled. We found, however, that a Mrs. Thomas was missing from Richmond, and a boy had been asked by her late servant to carry a box for her over Barnes Bridge. Half way over she took it from him. He heard a splash, and the woman reappeared without the box. She was traced as having left King’s Cross at midnight a week before, and her identity established by a prison form found in the pocket of a dress she left behind as Catherine Webster. After a hue and cry for four days she was found in Ireland and brought to London. She made a statement admitting the death of Mrs. Thomas, but incriminating one Church, who had bought the murdered woman’s things. He was subsequently arrested, but the case against him

failed. In the result Webster was found guilty and executed on July 29, fully confessing her crime and that she struck her in a passion. Seeing her dead, the idea came to her to impersonate her and seize her goods. In this case the greatest difficulty was experienced with the Press. The reporters threatened and attempted to bribe the police—one of them [in original diary *The Times* reporter] coming to me and saying it would be the worse for the department unless he got full information. I promptly wrote to his editor. They also got hold of the witnesses. Suggestions poured in from the public by the hundred, and the employment of bloodhounds and other means [was] advised."

It was alleged that the new authorities at Scotland Yard encouraged detectives to make arrests without very definite evidence. Occasional police mistakes were magnified in the Press, and the public was warned against the perils of employing regular detectives—a practice which the late Sir Richard Mayne had always regarded with grave misgivings. Some very fine writing was spent on the mischief to be apprehended from the un-English system of espionage and on the direct inducement to perjury offered by the payment of rewards. On the one hand we find the new Director attacked for excess of zeal on the part of himself and his agents. Simultaneously, in other quarters, he was rebuked for the "hideous ineptitude" of his methods. When his detectives were not hopelessly clumsy they were desperately venal. It was time, declared an amateur investigator

of crime, that an end be put to the prevailing system of police blackmail. The appointment of Vincent had been an act of nepotism, and his incapacity was the talk of London.

The Home Secretary (Cross) stood up loyally for his subordinate, and by degrees this spiteful kind of criticism died away.

Another important case which came up early in Vincent's career at Scotland Yard was the prosecution of a Foreign Office writer for "stealing a secret document purporting to be a communication between the Governments of Russia and England." The document was, of course, Lord Beaconsfield's "secret treaty," and, by an act of almost incredible official foolishness, had been given for copying purposes to a writer at 10d. an hour. He sold the information to the *Globe*, which published on June 10 a special edition summarising the whole arrangement. The delinquent copyist, not content with his original payment, tried to make a further market. He was identified without difficulty and convicted. But the real offender—the Foreign Office people who gave him the chance of trading in State secrets—went unpunished.

Always unconventional in his methods, Vincent incurred censure for using the advertisement columns of the daily papers to aid him in detection of crime. On one occasion he was soundly lectured for advertising £200 reward for the arrest of a dynamiter, with a full description of his appearance and a facsimile of his handwriting. Such procedure, he was told, was "sensational," and more worthy of a private detective

office than a dignified Government Department. The missing man's letter, it should perhaps be mentioned, was an order for ten detonators, and the writer was supposed to have placed a packet of dynamite on the railway between Bushey and Watford. In all the circumstances, the delicacy of Vincent's critics may be thought a little overdone.

A case which excited much comment in the Press was that of a chemist living in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, who had been convicted of supplying women with noxious drugs. The police had set a trap for him, and Scotland Yard was bitterly attacked for adopting the odious foreign practice of employing an *agent provocateur*. The remarks of the judge who tried the case (the late Mr. Justice Stephen) were to the following effect :

“One important part of the question was as to the means adopted by the police for entrapping the prisoner into committing a crime. He regretted that the course had been taken ; but he felt it to be a matter of extreme difficulty as to how far deception in such cases was justifiable. At the same time there was a fluency and readiness of invention, and a facility of employing spies to go and lie—for that was the plain English of it—and it was as right it should be spoken in Courts of Justice as elsewhere—a readiness to devise these inventions which was very painful to witness. At the same time, while all must feel that their common instincts in favour of the truth must be preserved and not allowed to be frittered away, yet they must be just to both sides, and remember that



if on the one hand they could not think well of a man who could write with fluency an artful letter in order to entrap another person into crime, they could hardly think too badly of the habitual murderer of unborn children. He could hardly conceive a more horrible occupation than that of a man who, possibly mixing up some false feeling of sympathy and compassion with a woman in distress, carried on so abominable a trade ; but in saying this he hoped the jury would not allow it to prejudice the prisoner. He was not speaking of the conduct of the police, and he could well understand that anyone charged with the protection of the life and character—aye, and to a great extent the morals—of this metropolis should feel his heart burn within him on receiving information leading him to believe that an apparently respectable tradesman in London was carrying on so horrible a traffic as that he had described. He could also understand that, with such a matter before them, persons high in the management of the police might have argued that they merely wished to detect and expose a person who was doing what he could to injure society at large in its deepest interests, just as if he were scattering poison abroad in a place where many might partake of it. He did not say that this view was right, but it was one that might be taken ; though he owned he thought that people who had any regard for their own integrity would have said whatever might or might not be justifiable they would not write that letter. But, while abhorring falsehood, the jury would equally detest vice, and what they had to do was, looking at all the facts,

to find whether the prisoner had provided a noxious drug for the purpose stated. The learned judge then went through the various facts adduced in evidence, and at six o'clock the jury retired to consider their verdict."

With more sentiment than logic, the jury coupled their verdict of guilty with a strong recommendation to mercy. The prisoner was sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour.

*En revanche*, a criminal prosecution was instituted against the police, and an interesting passage in Vincent's diary takes us behind the scenes of this much-discussed case: "At the same sessions of the Central Criminal Court, a Bill of Indictment was preferred direct to the Grand Jury without a word of notice or any magisterial proceedings against the Inspector, two sergeants, and a female searcher engaged in the case. I received a telegram about noon on December 16, 1880, that the Grand Jury had found a true bill and that the case would be taken next day. There was not a moment to lose, so I instructed Messrs. Wontner, the very able criminal solicitors, to defend, and to retain Mr. Charles Russell, q.c. (afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen, Lord Chief Justice of England), and Mr. H. B. (afterwards Sir Harry) Poland and Mr. Montagu Williams. There was some doubt as to the line of defence it would be wisest to adopt. I insisted that it would be much better to admit the facts and to plead that the action taken was in the public interest and in the execution of public duty. Mr. Russell, whose experience was only equalled by

his forensic ability, held strongly to a contrary view, and with such vehement temper that he threw down his brief a few minutes before the case was called on, declining to be responsible for such a course.

"The moment was an anxious one, for we were left with Poland as our leading counsel. However profound his knowledge of the Criminal Law, he was an indifferent speaker, difficult to follow and very hesitating. The relief was therefore great when presently that greatest of criminal lawyers and strong judge, the Hon. Sir James FitzJames Stephen, came into Court and after a few observations from Mr. Poland, said 'that the first three counts were bad on the face of them, as too general, and that in the fourth there was a substantial defect, which it was not in his power to amend,' adding that 'this was a very peculiar case, and he did not wish to cast the smallest approach to a censure on the prosecution for what had been done.' I never was so pleased as when those excellent officers, Local Inspector O'Callaghan, Sergeant Shrider, and Sergeant Stroud stepped out of the dock. It was well understood that they were in no way whatever to blame, but they were grateful to me for sticking to them so resolutely. There is no saying what would have happened if the case had come before a weak Judge."

Vincent was severely and very generally condemned, though some of his saner critics remarked that there had been no question of seducing a hitherto innocent person into criminal paths. The prisoner had long been suspected, and was, in fact, in the habit of selling this particular class of drugs. Mr. Labouchere said

outright that, in his opinion, the police deserved commendation for the steps they had taken to bring home the guilt of a notorious malefactor. Nevertheless, the agitation was kept up, and the prisoner treated as a sort of martyr. On the whole, it may be said for the Home Secretary (Harcourt) that he stood loyally by his subordinate. Questioned in the House of Commons (January 11, 1881), he found it necessary to express regret for the action of the police. It had been taken without his knowledge. He had not heard of it till the eve of the trial, and at once asked for a report. The police had replied by quoting a case, of ten years before, which was almost identical in its circumstances. During the proceedings in 1871 a similar objection had been taken by the defence, but was overruled by the Common Sergeant after consultation with Lord Justice Bovill and Baron Channell. In these circumstances it was impossible, Sir William showed, to direct a prosecution of the police.

"The House will be more interested," he went on, "in learning what is to be done in this class of cases for the future. They are amongst the most painful and difficult cases that can exercise the discretion of those who are responsible for the prevention of crime. There are dangers on both sides. In the first place, there is the danger that, while the police may be in possession of information that crimes most mischievous to society are being committed, these crimes may be difficult, if not impossible, of detection by ordinary means. The other day the police had information that another man had been carrying on practices similar to

those of Titley, but they had insufficient evidence to prosecute. Subsequently, both the woman and the child died, and a prosecution will now follow ; but this is a prosecution which will have cost two lives. Then there is another danger, that the confidence of the public may be shaken in the good faith of the police, and, of all the evils that could occur, that would be the greatest. I have no hesitation in stating my opinion that the cases in which it is necessary or justifiable for the police to resort to artifice of the description practised in this case must be rare indeed. As a rule the police ought not to set traps for people ; but if there is to be a departure from this rule under extraordinary circumstances, the matter is one of such difficulty that the discretion ought not to rest with the police authorities. I have accordingly directed that no such methods shall be resorted to for the future without direct communication or authority from the Home Office, the responsibility being one which, in my opinion, the Secretary of State ought not, in the interests of the public, to shrink from."

Whatever may be thought of Scotland Yard's procedure, it was the height of sentimental perversity to represent the criminal as deserving of public sympathy. Nevertheless, worthy persons got up memorials for a reduction of his punishment, but, in spite of parliamentary and newspaper pressure, the Home Secretary staunchly refused to release this very debased and uninteresting offender.

It was at the end of June, 1881, that one of the most famous of modern murders was committed. On the London and Brighton Railway between Three

Bridges and Balcombe, Mr. Israel Frederick Gould was killed by Percy Lefroy Mapleton. In a few days Vincent had the United Kingdom (and other countries also) placarded with portraits of the murderer (who had cleverly escaped from the police), with a facsimile of his handwriting, and £200 was offered for his arrest, which was effected on July 8th. The most remarkable feature of the case was that in spite of evidence so clear that the jury spent but ten minutes in deliberation, a large number of amateur investigators insisted upon his innocence. It was something of a shock to these worthy persons that before his execution at Lewes he confessed his guilt.

A specimen from the Chief Director's post-bag is perhaps worth reproduction :

“ BOW STREET.

“ I am now in the Police Force, make most of your time as it is short in this world. The man that smashed your window ought to have smashed your head.

“ You very kindly gave me a watch, but how did you come by it, you didnt pay for it, did you ever let the Public know how you got those watchès all out of the lost property office.

“ Does Harcort know? I suppose old ‘ Cross ’ your relation knew all about them, he knew you where a fool without brains. It made you a common slop like myself.”

In spite of exacting official tasks, Vincent, in 1881, found time to compile and bring out a *Police Code and Manual of the Criminal Law*. It was his belief



"CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION"

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that most of the errors committed by the police—which gave so much worry to their chiefs—were due to ignorance of the law and deficient training in their duties. His book was intended to remove that excuse. Naturally, the first edition, though praised without reserve by the legal and lay Press, was somewhat rough in form, in certain respects incomplete.

Alphabetically arranged, the subject-matter was rendered intelligible to the unprofessional readers, police officials, and others for whom the book had been specially intended. Vincent, as his habit was, left no stone unturned in his effort to push this really opportune and practical publication. Incidentally, the book proved, what had become sufficiently obvious, that the organisation of the Criminal Investigation Department had been rendered both energetic and systematic, as might have been expected from the Director's personal character, and that he insisted upon his subordinates exercising qualities which in himself he was always anxious to perfect—minute attention to details and tact in dealing with men. Very soon the Code became a valuable property. Before the end of 1881 we find Messrs. Cassell announcing a third and revised edition. To a new and abridged edition, published towards the end of 1882, Mr. Justice Hawkins (the late Lord Brampton) had consented to write a preface, in which the most experienced of practitioners in Criminal Law gave some sound and outspoken advice to the police. The book in this popular form had a distinct vogue. A young gentleman who had been dining in

the best of company at a well-known club had got into difficulties with a constable in the West End. Taking refuge on a lamp-post, he read from a copy of the book certain passages from Sir Henry's advice as to the manner in which the police shall discharge this duty.

The book since ran through many large editions, bringing in regularly a yearly income of from £80 to £100.

One of the minor tasks undertaken by Vincent was to improve and modernise the *Police Gazette*, the official Scotland Yard publication which had been started in 1828 under the somewhat racy title of *Hue and Cry*. Originally it had been managed by the chief clerk at Bow Street, and for more than fifty years no important change had been made in the system. It contained four pages devoted to descriptions of fugitives from justice and two to lists of deserters. The names were arranged in no intelligible order, and the paper was practically valueless as a means of communication between Scotland Yard and the local police officer. On resolving to take the *Gazette* thoroughly in hand, Vincent, as usual, was careful not to offend the existing authorities, but secured, where a mere bustling reformer would have lost, the present editor's help and sympathy. Some opposition to this rather obvious reform was offered from an unexpected quarter—the London stipendiary magistrates. But the misconception which they had formed to Vincent's purpose was removed at an interview which he held with Sir James Ingham. It was in the tactful handling of people whom an incon-

siderate Director would have tried to coerce that Vincent owed so much of his success in getting things done. Often and often we hear some zealous person complaining that his efforts are being thwarted by obstruction, vested interests, or sheer irrational conservatism. In nine cases out of ten the blame lies with the innovator. If a man goes without treading on corns he must not be surprised when somebody trips him up.

Arrangements were made for free and cheap circulation in all quarters specially interested in the detection of crime for the publication of criminals' portraits and illustrations of stolen property. Against the advantage which in some cases might be given to the malefactor who would be informed of what the police were doing in his case had to be set the general advantage of bringing all detective agencies into communication and of enlisting the public in the work of tracking noted offenders.

Objection was, of course, made to the reform in the *Gazette*, especially by the metropolitan magistrates, and Sir William, privately the most timid of administrators, wrote to Vincent in some alarm, but Sir James Ingham was won over, and this made an end of his colleague's opposition.

At the end of 1883 the improved *Police Gazette* made its appearance. Though as a rule threatening letters in England have no significance, great numbers proceeding from the same person, they cannot altogether be disregarded. Even if they come from a lunatic or a schoolgirl it is necessary to prevent any sinister attempt, and Vincent instituted at Scotland

Yard an official album. The practice of writing anonymous letters he considered peculiarly English. Often and often it has led to the prevention or detection of crime. Sometimes the wife or mistress of a criminal wishes to check his downward career ; sometimes to rid herself of a troublesome companion, a conspirator may take alarm ; a landlady or fellow-lodger may have noted suspicious circumstances. What could be simpler than recourse to the penny post ? A curious case is mentioned by Mr. Thomas Pinkerton, of the famous New York Agency, in his book on Forgery :

“I recall a forgery we investigated wherein an anonymous letter was written to the bank victimised offering information as to the identity of the forger. The anonymous letter and the forgery both appeared to have been written by the same person, and on our determining the identity of the writer of the letter, and identifying him for the forgery, and confronting him with the anonymous letter, he acknowledged that he had executed the forgery, but strenuously denied writing the letter, but confessing that it was written by his brother. The marked similarity in the writing was explained by the family characteristics, and from the fact that both men attended the same school and were taught in writing by the same teacher, thereby adopting the same style of writing.”

Vincent, in his diary, recalls the fact that the blowing up of Pentonville Prison in 1868 had been foretold in a letter received on the very morning by

the Chief Commissioner. But, in accordance with the practice of the time, Sir Richard Mayne tossed the warning aside.

It is by means of an anonymous letter that Vincent in 1880 had earned a good deal of kudos in regard to the vindication of men who two years before had been wrongfully convicted of burglary. An unsigned communication asked his attention to the true facts of the case, as confessed by the actual culprit. Instead of disregarding what *prima facie* was a disreputable and untrustworthy communication, the Director of Criminal Investigations showed himself as ready to take trouble in restoring innocent men to liberty as in bringing the guilty to punishment. Eventually the case was reopened by the Home Office, and the prisoners released.

Happily the Government and its agents were strong enough to disregard the clamour against sharp dealing with anarchists. As a matter of political development, however, it is interesting to note that in this country there were two opinions about the prosecution of Johann Most (May, 1881). The Emperor of Russia had been assassinated on March 15. Four days later the *Freiheit*, of which Most was editor, published in London an article which, as officially translated, began as follows :

“ The following is a copy of the article that was the subject of the charge against the defendant. The paper was inscribed with a red border, and the article was headed :

“ ‘ Triumph—Triumph. At Last. The word of the

poet is fulfilled—one of the most horrible tyrants of Europe, whose destruction has long been sworn, and before whose withering and revengeful breath countless heroes and heroines of the Russian people sank into the grave of the prison—the Emperor of Russia is no more. As the monster was returning from one of the customary diversions provided for him by blind hordes of blood and iron slaves, the death doom long since pronounced reached and smote him. Five times had it been vouchsafed to this *Canaille* to touch the boundary between hither and thither, and to chatter about the finger of God as having recently saved his accursed life, when the hand of the people stopped his mouth for ever. The terrible news rang like a thunderbolt in the princely castles wherein dwelt the guilt-laden ones, who have a thousand times over merited a like fate. Long forfeited heads tremble from Constantinople to Washington. Why is so-called Tyrannicide so rare? Could only one such crowned ragamuffin be destroyed per month, there would be slight desire in the future to play at monarchy.'

"There were other articles published in the *Freiheit*, and the assassin Rousakoff was described as a person who ought never to be spoken of but with reverence. It was also stated that the murder of the Emperor Alexander was calculated to have great effect upon the monarchs of other countries, who were represented as suffering from cowardly fear, at which fear the writer of the article expressed his joy. Another article commenced with the expression, 'Who could be scoundrel enough to bewail the death of such a beast?'

It went on to say: 'May the bold deed which we commend inspire revolutionary minds far and wide with fresh courage,' and said that 'the Emperor died like a dog.' Another article spoke of the Emperor of Germany as the 'cruel grapeshot Prince of Prussia,' and suggested that he ought to share the fate of the Emperor of Russia, and other crowned heads were mentioned as trembling in fear of a similar fate; and that it was nonsense to suppose that the death of one prince did no good because another took his place, and the thrower of the bomb that killed the Emperor was described as being good."

Most was sentenced to sixteen months' hard labour, and on leaving the dock remarked that he might as well have been in Russia!

By sentimental sympathisers with the spirit of revolt it was made a charge against Scotland Yard that it had entered into communication with the police in foreign capitals. In particular it was alleged that cyphers found in Most's possession had led to the arrest in Vienna of several Socialist agitators. The letters and keys, it was stated, had been sent from London. Questioned in the House of Commons by the late Mr. Joseph Cowen, the Home Secretary denied the particular allegation, but on broad grounds of public policy defended the principle on which Scotland Yard was accused of having acted. On behalf of the Government, as well as himself, he repudiated the fallacy that assassinations and plots against life are venial crimes to be tolerated or extenuated as political offences.

"If the police of this country," he went on, "in the discharge of their ordinary duties and in the administration of English law, became acquainted with circumstances which place in danger from the hand of the assassin the life of any person, whether he be a sovereign or a private person, whether at home or abroad, it is in my judgment their duty to give such information as shall be best calculated to avert the perpetration of the crime. We should have a right to expect such a course of conduct from any civilised Government if the life of our own sovereign or those of our fellow citizens were placed in peril, and that which we should regard as the duty of others we shall not fail ourselves to perform."

At this time, however, the British public was obsessed with an almost incurable optimism, and fun, good, bad, and indifferent, was made of supposed confidential deliberations between the Not-quite-at-Home Secretary and the Chief of the Unreflective Department. Vincent was repeatedly twitted with French training and French methods. In Paris, however, he was highly esteemed, and the highest police officials sought their English confrère's advice and opinion.

Even as to Fenian plots, the general tendency in this country was to make light of the alarm, even though at the end of February it was discovered that two consignments of infernal machines from America to England had been found, packed away in cement barrels, upon passenger vessels sailing for Liverpool.

"Mr. Labouchere, who in his time has formed



strange friendships, seems to have taken a fancy to a ticket-of-leave man who had been describing his curious experiences of convict life. He had married an expensive wife, and for domestic reasons turned to forgery. Now, however, he was on the upward path. He looked respectable, Mr. Labouchere testified, and was a contributor to *Truth*. Would Vincent care to see him? Meantime would he remember, in case Mr. Labouchere should be arrested, that he would prefer to be incarcerated in Horsemonger Lane Gaol, as it 'stood high and was a healthy place of residence.'

"The object of Mr. Labouchere's solicitude proved to be one Saunders, a most plausible fellow, who had been sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for robbing prostitutes in the most heartless manner. He was of good appearance and address, and, standing on the steps of White's or one of the clubs in the West End, would gain their confidence as they passed. He evaded detection for a long time, but was not long at large before he recommenced the same tricks. He spoke, however, very interestingly of his prior life, and said the prisons were well administered and the prisoners well off."

Burglary is an offence more frequent in England, where most families live in separate houses, than in foreign towns, where the flat system prevails. Vincent felt that the crime might be considerably reduced if he could check the business of the receivers, especially the marine store-dealers and pawnbrokers. He was quite aware of the organised opposition which he would arouse by what seemed like an attack on so powerful an interest as that of the pawnbrokers, and

pointed out the difficulties awaiting the Stolen Goods Bill prepared by the Home Office. Sir Godfrey Lushington, however, a somewhat stiff-necked official, overruled these objections, and Vincent had to bear the brunt of a long correspondence. The story is worth relating in some detail, because it serves to explain what may be the obstacles to passing even a simple and obviously useful Bill if it happens to wound the susceptibilities of an organised interest. All the practical grievances apprehended by the pawnbrokers, it will be seen, Vincent was anxious to smooth away. Their real objection—as honest men carrying on an honest trade—was to being classed by implication with wrongdoers. Vincent commenced operations by proposing a friendly interview with leading members of the trade as represented by the Pawnbrokers' Protection Society. Although the initial proceedings went off quietly enough, it soon became evident that the Society intended to fight with all its strength against increased stringency of the public regulations. To the pawnbroker in a large way of business, receiving only articles of considerable value, it would be comparatively easy to assist the course of justice in the manner proposed by Scotland Yard. He would not deal with more than a few hundred pledges in the month. But the tradesman in a poor neighbourhood might in the meantime have 7000 or 8000 articles pass through his hands. The minute registration proposed would be a serious undertaking. In a business of that class, moreover, it was not possible to keep "cats that did not catch mice"; and for assistants to be constantly called away

in order to give evidence in courts of law would be an intolerable burden to their employers. Another neat argumentative point was scored by the pawnbrokers. The magistrates, they said, wished the suspicious customer to be sent away, but what Scotland Yard wanted was that he should be attracted and trapped for the benefit of the police.

That the pawnbrokers had a genuine case Vincent was glad to recognise, and at the conference which he held with the trade he made it clear that he regarded them as a very respectable body of men. He admitted the hardships that might be inflicted upon an individual pawnbroker through some magistrate's inconsiderate censure (though that was a question which lay outside his province), and detailed the rules laid down to protect the trade from fussy and dishonest detectives.

It was not till April, 1881, that Vincent succeeded in giving practical shape to his policy in regard to pawnbrokers. Among his papers is a copy of the Stolen Goods Bill, introduced in the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor (Selborne) with a memorandum "drawn by myself." During the interval, he had written more than twenty letters on the subject to the Home Secretary. The Bill was received by the trade with indignant protest. Certainly it was a stringent measure, since it enabled a search-warrant to be issued on a police inspector's demand, imposed heavy penalties on pawnbrokers who had failed in suspicious cases to give information to the police, and rendered them liable, in case of neglect, to forfeiture of their licences.

To the objections formulated by the Pawnbrokers' Association, Vincent, who meantime had consulted the Chief Constables all over the country, drew up a detailed reply in which he argued that the honest men in the trade, the great majority, would have nothing to fear. The agitation against Vincent's proposals was, however, so skilfully engineered that, though by agreement the Bill had been referred to a Select Committee, in August the Government announced that they should drop it for the session—which meant that the promoters would have to begin their work all over again.

Vincent's activity behind the scenes was no secret. It was complained that in his evidence before the Select Committee he had quoted instances of bad conduct on the part of individual pawnbrokers, but declined to give names communicated to him in confidential police reports. Briefly, the trade considered itself at a serious disadvantage before the Select Committee, and in their extremity its representatives turned to the late Lord Salisbury, who gave them a kind reception. He advised them to draw up a strong statement of their grievances, and ask for leave to give rebutting evidence.

During an interval in the proceedings before the Select Committee, it happened that Mr. Hardaker, of the Defence Association, got into personal conversation with the Director of Criminal Investigations, who had just stated that the pawnbrokers as a rule gave very little assistance to the police. He added that his previous overtures to the pawnbrokers had led to no result. They had not shown a reciprocal spirit.

Otherwise he would not have put them into the Bill.

This implied message from Scotland Yard was communicated by Mr. Hardaker to the London trade, and a special meeting called of the Metropolitan Pawnbrokers' Defence Society. It was decided to call a meeting of the whole trade. Meantime, the honorary secretary (Mr. Layman) deprecated any private intercourse with the Director of Criminal Investigations, who, he added, was no ordinary man. He believed himself to be in the right and the pawnbrokers in the wrong. It was, perhaps, a fairly correct estimate of Vincent's official career—he believed himself to be in the right. It was Mr. Hardaker's belief, so he stated, that Vincent was but the mouthpiece of his subordinates. He echoed the thoughts of the police and reposed a childlike faith in what they told him.

At this point in the controversy the pawnbrokers were profuse in charges of perjury and blackmail against the police. They did not improve their case to the public mind when they went on to attack Lord Chancellor Selborne, who, they said, had descended from his high place in order to become counsel for Scotland Yard. But in spite of Vincent's alleged credulity, Mr. Hardaker did not support the extremists, who opposed any idea of dealing with him. On this point he was dead against the advisers of the London trade.

On April 24 the Stolen Goods Bill, an exact reprint of last Session's dropped measure, was introduced in the Upper House by the Lord Chancellor and read a second time.

On July 10 the Bill passed through the House of Lords. In spite of vigorous efforts on its behalf, the Stolen Goods Bill, having passed through the House of Lords, was abandoned by the Government in the House of Commons. In October, 1882, negotiations were resumed between Scotland Yard and the Pawnbrokers' Defence Association. A private interview was arranged between Vincent and Mr. Alfred Hardaker, the trade stipulating that they should be exempted from the next Stolen Goods Bill, but agreeing to a Bill amending the Pawnbrokers Act and embodying the seven points on which Vincent had insisted.

Further negotiations took place between the Home Office and the trade, with the result that nothing was done. Mr. Alfred Hardaker naturally exulted, and told the Defence Association that he had promised Mr. Vincent to show him the strength of the pawnbrokers when the Bill got into the House of Commons. Mr. Vincent smiled one of his sweetest smiles, and suggested that the strength of the police would be far greater.

It was agreed, in fact, that the Pawnbrokers Bill should be dropped, but the Stolen Goods Bill not opposed if the exemption clause were maintained.

Later on, as member of Parliament, Vincent returned to the attack, but without success.

In August, 1910, a small gang of housebreakers were run to earth, and in their possession were found about 150 pawn-tickets—a sufficient comment on the trade contention that regular criminals are not in the habit of pledging stolen goods.

Into the support of the Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage, a charity which enjoyed the assistance and sympathy of Baroness Burdett Coutts, the new Director of Criminal Investigation threw something more than official zeal. Long after his connection with Scotland Yard had come to an end he gave active assistance to the cause.

On December 8, 1881, it may be mentioned, Vincent for the first time took the chair at the "Annual Supper to the Criminal Classes" under the auspices of the St. Giles's Christian Mission. With a bold disregard for theories just then coming into fashion he declared that it lay with discharged prisoners to avail themselves of such help as was offered by workers like Mr. George Hatton and Mr. Wheatley.

"You have all been criminals, but do not think that on that account you belong for ever to the criminal class. There is no such class in the natural disposition of social grades. No man was born a criminal. Defective education, evil influences, drink, bad companionship, and very likely real want, led you into crime. Then you joined the criminal class by your own action. It is free to each one of you to leave it in like manner. I trust many have done so. To those who have not, I say delay no longer, and let me speak through you to others who are not here. All the gentlemen around me, and hundreds throughout this benevolent country, will help those who help themselves. This Mission, assisted as I trust it will be by a generous public, will endeavour to find you honest employment or aid you in emigration. No criminal is

a prosperous man. He has no real friends ; he knows not who will denounce him to justice ; his share of the spoil is disputed ; he is robbed himself by the receiver ; he is in constant dread of apprehension, which is certain to be effected sooner or later ; he is always poor. But honest labour offers you a sufficiency, a happy home, and peace of mind. The Colonies and genial climes beyond the sea call for your muscular arms, and there you may rise to wealth. The supper just now was to some members of a criminal class, but rise, men, to-morrow as honest citizens. If any are enjoying their liberty upon certain prescribed conditions for the prevention of crime, let them not delude themselves or others by the supposition that they hinder honest employment. If any condition of licence or supervision presses hardly in some special case, go to the police and explain the difficulty, and if you give practical evidence and proof that you are doing your utmost to lead a reformed life, any little hardship there may be will be surely lightened as far as possible. Here in the metropolis you have the Convict Office especially existing at Scotland Yard for your assistance, and there is no police or prison authority throughout the country who does not prefer to hear of your getting honest employment to seeing you again in custody. Society is not against you so long as you do not war against it."

This was another of the charities in which his interest remained to the end of his life unabated.

In the work of assisting discharged prisoners to win an honest living, Vincent took an active part. So far as was possible, he favoured indulgence being



shown to ticket-of-leave men. If one of them were engaged in some respectable employment, and likely to damage his position through being compelled every week to report himself in person to the police, the voucher of some responsible person would be accepted at Scotland Yard, or, if necessary, the man could be visited by an officer in plain clothes.

A good deal of criticism, not altogether favourable, was aroused by a circular which Vincent had allowed to be issued to certain employers of labour, asking them to co-operate in giving work to recommended ex-convicts. Vincent was then acting in co-operation with the St. Giles's Christian Mission and the Royal Society for the Assistance of Discharged Soldiers, but at the "Thieves' Supper" (sixth of the series) held on December 11, 1882, took the occasion of mentioning other institutions of the same class, viz. the Sheriffs' Fund and the Metropolitan Discharged Prisoners Society.

Not much harm was done to the Director's reputation by the stereotyped sneers against pampering hardened criminals while honest folk were left to rub along as they might. There was more substance in the remark that more valuable results might be expected from a uniform system worked by public authority under the direction of experts, for the establishment of penal communities. As for assisting ex-convicts to start a new life in British colonies, it was pointed out that such immigrants were not desired oversea, and, at least by one colony, their landing had already been prohibited.

On the question of discharged prisoners, the case

for aid was stated by Vincent in a short article published in the *Contemporary Review* (March, 1883). In some respects the views expressed by the Director of Criminal Investigations nearly thirty years ago were much the same as those advocated to-day by advanced reformers. He drew a broad distinction between the irreclaimables (who, he thought, could not be too severely treated or too long imprisoned) and men not radically vicious who had yielded to temptation, and having once been infected with the prison taint were unable, without assistance, to make a fresh start in life. He wrote with appreciation of the work done by the various societies, but suggested that their efforts would be more effective if brought into co-ordination, and proposed that a central conference should be held. He explained the policy of the Prevention of Crimes Act then in force in regard both to ticket-of-leave men and persons sentenced, after undergoing a term of penal servitude, to a period of police supervision.

The requirements of the Prevention of Crimes Acts are :

(a) That every license holder and supervisee shall notify his or her place of residence to the chief officer of police of the district into which he or she is liberated or removes within forty-eight hours.

(b) That any subsequent change of address shall also be notified on his or her removal.

(c) That he or she shall notify to the chief police officer of the district his or her intention to leave the said district, as well as the chief police officer of the district into which he or she removes.

(d) That being a male he shall report himself once in every month, at such time and place and to such person as shall be prescribed by the chief police officer of the district. This report to be made personally, unless the privilege of reporting by letter has been specially allowed.

There is nothing in these conditions of liberty which interferes with honest employment in the majority of cases ; but if the monthly report does entail any hardship, a chief officer of police is empowered by the statute to allow it to be made by letter.

The penalty for neglecting to comply with these provisions entails forfeiture of the licence, in the case of a convict, and twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour in that of a supervisee.

It is the knowledge that this power exists which makes many a wavering man more careful in his conduct in districts where the Acts are strictly enforced. Unfortunately, this is the exception rather than the rule ; and the result is that the worst characters leave a district where the law is closely applied, and remove to one where greater leniency prevails.

In October, 1883, the Social Service Association met at Huddersfield, and Vincent, as Chairman of the Repression of Crime Section, read an address which embodied the results of his experience at Scotland Yard. He was opposed, he said, to giving over the control of the Metropolitan Police to a local authority (the County Council was not then in existence), since it would then be necessary to institute, under the Home Office, another body of State Police. The example of Paris was not encouraging where expenditure was

controlled by the Conseil Municipal, while orders were issued by the Minister of the Interior. In Vincent's opinion "danger would have resulted" during the past three years of Fenian conspiracy if the London police had not been controlled by a State department. In regard to the detection of crime, he considered that important facilities were given by photography and the telegraph, which counteracted the advantage to fugitive criminals afforded by the increased rapidity of locomotion. On the whole, the publicity of the Press was useful to the police. In results obtained, the English system was not inferior to that of the Police de Sureté in Paris. In sixty cases out of a hundred arrests were made, and in about 75 per cent convictions were obtained.

Vincent appeared to favour the principle of the Criminal Appeal Bill, then before Parliament, and looked forward to the day when interrogation of the accused by a judge or magistrate—though certainly not by counsel—or police, would become part of the English system. Here, however, his French training led him to misjudge the tendency of English development.

On the other hand, Vincent anticipated the advanced reformers of our own time by advocating the probation system, then practised in Massachusetts, and partially adopted of late years in this country.

A considerable number of persons receiving this indulgence in America had, it was confessed, relapsed into crime, but they represented no more than 15 per cent of the whole number. "Would imprisonment have shown a better result?"

While in favour of "great leniency" on a first conviction, Vincent held that almost invariably a second should entail penal servitude. On the third occasion it should be for not less than fifteen years. The habitual criminal, to his mind, was past reforming. He approved the French treatment of *récidivistes*, not because they would be reformed in New Caledonia, but because France got rid of them.

His paper, which, though it contained no specially novel ideas, stated several important problems in a lucid and emphatic manner, was the subject of much laudatory comment, both at home and abroad.

With the criminals whom he had helped in bringing to justice the Director was by no means unpopular. It is a peculiarity of the irreclaimables that they have a moral standard of their own which they jealously uphold. Against a sworn enemy, if he fights them fairly, they bear no malice. A judge like Hawkins, or a prosecuting counsel such as Poland, they are quite ready to regard as a hero, and the benefit of this good understanding they extended to Vincent and some of his most active assistants at Scotland Yard.

A subordinate officer in the Criminal Investigation Department, after a brief experience of the new Director, seems to have summed up the general opinion of Scotland Yard. He had made a lot of enemies at first, declared this witness, because he would do things in his own way. But he was not one of the high and mighty people; he did not leave others to do all the work while he took all the credit. He was quick enough to find out mistakes, and spoke his mind about them, but for people who gave him

satisfaction he was always ready with a kind word. "He is a gentleman," was the verdict, "and never comes airs over a fellow as some of the bigwigs do." The verdict thus given in his first year of office was very much what his subordinates thought of him when he laid down office.

Vincent's good humour and social popularity tended to increase his labours; it became the fashion to ask for his guidance in visiting slums and places of criminal resort. In the case of Royal personages and foreign ministers it was difficult to refuse, but he kicked a little when minor notabilities wished to be taken the round of the common lodging-houses and casual wards. "I will consider the matter," he would reply, "if you will tell me the object you have in view, and will name an hour at which I can send some of the casuals under police escort to see you at dinner at the — Club, and subsequently in bed."

## CHAPTER VII

### FIGHTING FENIANS AND ANARCHISTS

WITH the change of Ministry in 1880, when Mr. Gladstone came in with a large majority and formed a Cabinet seldom surpassed in the capacity of individual members, it was hoped at Scotland Yard that some such reorganisation would be carried out as had been recommended by the latest Police Committee. Vincent in particular was sanguine, since the outgoing Under-Secretary (White Ridley) had left a memorandum calling attention to his work and claims. Nor was the new Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, slow to recognise the value of the Director's services. On the first lull in State business he insisted on Vincent taking a good vacation—the first since his appointment. Nevertheless, the advent of the Liberal party to power marked the beginning of a prolonged period of strain and toil. In addition to the normal business described in the previous chapter, the responsibilities of Scotland Yard in regard to the prevention and detection of crime were enormously increased by the lawless turn given about this time to the Irish Nationalist agitation.

In August a strong memorandum had been addressed by Vincent to the Chief Commissioner, urging that preparations should forthwith be made to

deal with Fenian conspiracy, and suggesting co-operation with the Royal Irish Constabulary. Henderson, however, always slow to move, preferred to wait for orders from the Secretary of State. In the autumn Harcourt began to stir himself. It would be tedious to reproduce the official memoranda exchanged and describe the obstructions which had to be surmounted before it was arranged that Anderson (who had special source of information on Fenianism, and peculiar skill in dealing with it) should attend to the Irish side of the expected campaign, while Vincent should have supreme authority in Great Britain. For the time he was to be relieved of all other cares. On January 23, 1881, an imperative note was addressed to him by Harcourt :

“SUNDAY, JAN. 23, 1881.

“My dear Vincent,

“The reports that come in to me as to the probability of explosions under the auspices of the ‘Skirmishing Committee’ become more and more alarming. I am much disturbed at the absolute want of information in which we seem to be with regard to Fenian organisation in London. All other objects should be postponed to our efforts to get some light into these dark places. If anything occurs there will be a terrible outcry.

“Yours very truly,

“W. V. H.

“You will find me at 7, Grafton Street, at 7 p.m. this evening.”

Next morning came another message. “You cannot get to work too soon or too energetically. I will



see you to-morrow. It seems to me that it would be desirable you should soon visit Lancashire."

Already steps had been taken to invite the assistance of police authorities throughout the United Kingdom in collecting information about Fenian doings. These must be "confidential, but free from inter-communication" in order to discover plots and allay panic. It was also explained that any police authority was fully at liberty to address itself direct to the Home Office, but that any communication to Vincent would be forwarded to the Secretary of State, so that full credit would be given to the original source. Clearly it was expedient to obviate local jealousy of head-quarters. The appeal to professional pride and the judicious exercise of tact met with a healthy response.

The next step was to pass the Crimes Bill—an undertaking not accomplished without many violent scenes, and all-night sittings. On February 1 the Cabinet decided to withdraw Michael Davitt's ticket-of-leave,<sup>1</sup> and send him back to prison that very day.

He had been present in the House of Commons, and an amusing story was printed in some of the newspapers that Harcourt, astonished at his audacity, had sent Vincent to sit beside him and keep an eye on him. Thereupon Mr. Labouchere, scenting a curious situation and wishing to improve it, went up to the Gallery, shook hands with Davitt, and introduced him to Vincent, genially remarking that they ought to know each other. Unfortunately the incident was invented. It was not till seven in the evening that Vincent

<sup>1</sup> He had been sentenced in 1870 for treason felony to fifteen years' penal servitude, but discharged on licence in 1877.

received from Mr. Forster his instructions as to the arrest. This is his narrative, written to his brother :—

“A day after my own heart. Arrangements of a plan of battle. Revolvers and sensations. Galloping escorts and success. Now, do you know what the grand *coup* was? This is the story of it. On Tuesday evening Mr. Forster told me at the House that the Cabinet had just decided to arrest Davitt, and that Sir William wanted to see me at once at the Home Office. I went over and found him in a great state of excitement with Sir Adolphus Liddell and Murdoch, wanting all the documents drawn instantly. I pacified him, and pointed out that hurried action would be assuredly faulty and that any illegality would be fatal. Moreover, that the Chief Magistrate should be seen and consulted. I saved them, they said, from the mess, for Sir William instantly acquiesced in my views. Leaving the Home Office (7.30 p.m.) I learnt that Davitt had left the House. I had been standing next to him under the Speaker’s Gallery. Fortunately, when Mr. Forster told me of the decision of the Cabinet, I posted Inspector Denning in charge of the police at the House of Commons, on the door with instructions to follow him as far as possible when he went away. He did so admirably, and hearing him say Euston to the cabman, went to Scotland Yard and told Inspr. Hagan to go to Euston to see if he went to Ireland. In the Secretary of State’s room at the House, Mr. Forster said he thought he had gone to America. I said I did not think so, but should be happier in a quarter of an hour’s time than now.

Harcourt asked why. I replied because a very impetuous inspector had gone to Euston and might arrest him or do some stupid thing. He asked how could that be, nobody knew of the intention of the Government. If he was arrested the officer should be instantly dismissed. I said I had told Inspector Denning, and very fortunately. The Secretary of State then jumped up, said he would have nothing more to do with the business. Forster must do it himself, etc. etc. Then in a few minutes he became mollified and courteous again.

“On Wednesday, February 2, the day was spent in getting the documents in order. They were first wrong in one detail, then in another. And everybody except me is afraid to approach the Secretary of State. At 11 a.m. there was a Conference at the Home Office with the Secretary of State, the Attorney-General, the Chief Magistrate, and Sir A. Liddell as to the draft. Then I saw Sir Cooper Key, Sea Lord of the Admiralty, to know if we could have a gunboat to bring Davitt from Kingstown to London by sea. Found impossible. Then at 2, a conference at the House as to how he should be brought by rail. I was anxious for a pilot engine, and suggested every precaution. Sir E. Henderson laughed at the idea, and Sir William supported him. At last the warrant was out in duplicate, one being kept in London in case he returned, the other going to Dublin by the 8.25 mail train in the hands of Chief Superintendent Williamson and Inspector Swainson. The general instructions were to arrest an hour before the mail, either last evening or this morning. Imagine then our con-

sternation at the Irish Office telegraphing that 'Queen's Counsel (cypher for Davitt) had been arrested at 3 o'clock and was coming over that night.' The wildest excitement prevailed, the news spread like wildfire. The scene in the House of Commons is historical. Ministers were wild with terror. The Adjutant-General was sent for, as Mr. Childers said 'we were in full revolution.' The lobbies and passages of the House were full of police. Reserves were sent for. A mob was expected. Henderson was telegraphed for but could not be found, so I had to arrange everything. All troops were confined to barracks. I was at the House till 11.30, seeing first one Minister and then another. Completing the arrangements for to-day. Inspector Butcher slept in Ebury Street. At 4.30 he, Sub-Inspector Townshend of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and I, started in an omnibus and pair for Willesden Junction, where a brougham and pair with five officers in plain clothes and three mounted men in plain clothes met us by appointment. The train was forty minutes late. I had had a pilot engine put on in front, and police precautions taken at Holyhead, Crewe, Stafford, and Rugby. I assigned a place to every man, and gave each a revolver with three rounds. At seven the pilot passed. At 7.10 the train came in. In three minutes the prisoner and the officers were seated and we were off. A mounted man in plain clothes, three mounted inspectors, the omnibus, the brougham, and we last in a tax-cart. We went at a great pace, reached Bow Street at 8. Went at once before the Chief Magistrate, who was

waiting. In a few minutes Davitt was committed. The van drew up. Police lined the roadway. A mounted escort of eight came out from hiding. I gave the order to Pentonville. They started at a gallop. I went round a corner and mounted; joined the cavalcade at Charing Cross. The van driver leading turned down St. Martin's Lane to Millbank according to order. Up Whitehall at a thundering pace. The escort all galloping, I on their right in boots and breeches, a groom behind me, and so right into Millbank without drawing rein, and arriving only three minutes after the hour named, while the Irish M.P.'s had gone to meet the mail at Euston Square, whither I sent an ostentatious escort, and meetings were assembling to be at Bow Street at the hour prisoners are usually brought up. Letters to the Secretary of State and to Forster, a gallop home, an hour's rest, and then work as usual. Henderson opposed the arrangements point by point, but I was indifferent and arranged them. This afternoon an interview with the Secretary of State, who is enchanted at the success, which really seems to please everybody."

Vincent feared, not without reason, that the arrest might lead to violent excitement in Ireland, but his brother (Edgar), writing from Richmond Barracks, Dublin, replied that the affair had been taken quietly.

As reference has been made in Vincent's account of the business to Harcourt's excitability, it is only fair to quote a more considered opinion. "It did not take me long," wrote Vincent, "to realise how capable and

courageous a man Harcourt was as a politician." At any hour of the day or night he was accessible. Sometimes his manner was captious and exasperating. Occasionally he would rap out some phrases which were far more offensive than he had intended. "He will keep walking up and down the room as if one were a bull in the arena and he the toreador." Another fault was that he "often wanted to know far too much detail"—the exact object of doing this thing or that, the exact way in which this or that act was done, or this or that item of information was obtained, the precise reason for recommending this or that course. This involved a great waste of time. Moreover, police work is not an exact science. One adopts simultaneously a number of courses, in the hope that one may lead to the desired goal. Again, it would be quite impossible to justify or make public all the steps by which a certain result has been achieved. Many must be beyond the strict letter of the law, and only justified by the aim in view or the end attained. The Secretary of State has no business to have knowledge of these steps. "Often did I remind Sir William Harcourt that if he knew them he took over my responsibility, and that his rôle was to know the result, and if illegality or a police act became a cause of complaint, he should be in a position to say that he had had no knowledge of it."

Nevertheless, Harcourt was a good man to work with. Not only was he friendly, kindly, and hospitable; he liked to give praise, and would frequently be at the pains to write congratulatory little notes. Another of his merits—in a subordinate's mind—was that if he

did not feel absolute contempt for the House of Commons, at least he was not afraid of it.

A contrast to Harcourt was his colleague, Forster, the Chief Secretary, who, under his rough exterior, was calm, deliberate, and full of common sense.

"Once they were both together in my room. 'Has so-and-so been found?' asked Harcourt. 'Not yet, but I have people on the look-out for him in every direction.' 'What is the good of the police if they have not got him yet? There will be murder,' said Harcourt, in his most bitter accents as he paced up and down the big room. 'What is the good, Harcourt, of talking like that? Don't you know that there are forty millions of people in the country, and to find one purely by description is not easy and takes time? Besides, a mistake would be disastrous.' Harcourt at once calmed down and said something soothing. But many and many were similar scenes, and they were very wearing with all the responsibility upon my shoulders."

The first immediate result of Davitt's arrest was the removal of the Land League's offices from Dublin to Paris, followed, of course, by the migration of Patrick Egar and James Stephens. So far as the police were concerned, this was advantageous, though Scotland Yard was short of capable linguists. It became necessary, however, to redouble the vigilance shown in guarding Ministers, especially Mr. Gladstone. Notoriously he hated this surveillance, and (Vincent declares) bore him a personal grudge for his unwelcome attention.

At 8 p.m. on the day of Davitt's capture a cypher

telegram was received at Scotland Yard that an attempt would be made that evening on Mr. Gladstone's life. Vincent took it to the Home Secretary, who refused to communicate it to the Prime Minister; Vincent must do the unpleasant job himself. When the great man had been fetched from his place on the Treasury Bench and was shown the message, without turning a hair, he simply said, "Well, what do you want me to do?" "Do not walk between the House and Downing Street," was the reply. "Give us more help in your protection, more information as to your movements." He promised acquiescence, but in a few days was as difficult as ever, and constantly eluded his guardian. He would step out of the garden gate while the unfortunate officer was waiting in the front hall. Hardly ever did he speak to the inspector, though, on one occasion, when returning from a Council at Windsor, as it was pouring with rain, he invited him to come inside an Atlas omnibus with him to Downing Street. Gladstone, says Vincent, was one of the very few threatened men whom he had found insensible to personal fear. Mr. Balfour was another. Forster only asked that he should not be told of threatening letters. Another member of the Cabinet (whose name it would be unfair to give) always carried in his breast-pocket a loaded revolver, and on the approach of any suspicious person, put his hand on it. He was visibly unnerved by the strain, and suffered from acute insomnia.

"I am coming to London to-morrow. I am anxious to write my definite opinion on the subject of my



personal protection there. From what I see and hear I am convinced that I should be accompanied by a man carrying a revolver, and who knows how to use it. Inspector M. carries a pistol, and is quite sufficient and satisfactory. But the other man who takes me home at night should be armed likewise. I do not care about his being a detective, but he should be a determined fellow with his wits about him. I consider this absolutely necessary; with this I should feel that due precautions were taken. Otherwise the danger of contrast between my fully protected state when in Ireland and my unprotected state in London would be very marked. I want two men—one to relieve the other, and I would as soon have no one at all as an unarmed man."

In this connection Vincent mentions that about the same time there had been a little epidemic in London of murders, or attempted murders, of policemen by armed burglars. The question was raised whether a revolver should be issued to constables on night duty. The opinion of the force was taken and found to be adverse—the extra risks would counterbalance the protection.

The man who gave Scotland Yard most trouble in 1881 was one Thomas Mooney. "We had clear information of his leaving America to organise volunteers to blow up barracks and public buildings. But despite every effort we could not pick him up in England. This greatly incensed Sir William Harcourt, who never ceased inquiring about him. Once he came up to me at an official reception and asked

if we had found Mooney. I said, 'Not yet,' upon which he became very excited, and said in a loud voice, 'The police are no use at all. I will dismiss the whole of them to-morrow morning.' I simply replied, 'I think, Sir William, we had better not discuss the matter further here. You see everybody is watching us.' As usual he cooled down at once, but these ebullitions were very trying and began to get on one's nerves."

Challenged in the House of Commons on the Government's right to open letters, Harcourt took a bold tone. A question had been addressed to the Postmaster-General. Harcourt intervened :

"The duty of answering this question belongs to the Secretary of State and not to the Postmaster-General, who has no responsibility in the matter. The power of the Secretary of State to open and detain letters is reserved and authorised by Parliament under the Statute 1 Vict. c. 36, sec. 25, and has been deliberately continued ever since. The employment of that power is an act of the gravest responsibility, not to be exercised except upon urgent necessity for the safety of the State and Her Majesty's subjects. The existence known to the Government of treasonable plots carried out by secret societies, like the Fenian conspiracy which pursues felonious ends by the most atrocious means, would justify and require the use of that power in the present as in past times. But the very nature of the dangers which might demand its employment is such as require the Minister entrusted by Parliament with the right and duty of putting it in force, to ask the support of this House in

declining to make any statement which might baffle and defeat the objects for which it was conferred. This power should either be taken away from the Secretary of State, or if the grave responsibility of possessing it is imposed on him, he should be protected in times like the present in his discretion as to its exercise." In spite of this explicit defence the right was rarely exercised, Vincent tells us. The Gladstone Ministry had no desire to experience a revival of the odium incurred by Sir James Graham.

In addition to guarding Ministers, the police were expected to protect public buildings. Attempts were made to blow up the Houses of Parliament, Government Offices in Parliament Street and Charles Street, the Police Head-quarters, London Bridge, and various railway stations. Again, it was thought necessary to keep Mr. Parnell under some sort of observation—not an easy task. No one knew at what time the House would break up, and the weary officers had an awkward task. Mr. Parnell used also to resort to many artifices to render his being followed difficult or impossible. One morning—February 19, 1881—he left the House at 3 a.m. and made for Covent Garden Market by bye-streets. The officer knew that he would lose time in the Market unless he got pretty near, and so gradually closed up. Mr. Parnell heard him, and suddenly turned round and said, "You are following me; who and what are you?" The constable made some shuffling excuse, and we all expected a scene next day. Mr. Parnell himself behaved very well and said nothing about it publicly. In return we let him alone, more especially as other

sources of information concerning him were available. In addition to an almost daily crop of false alarms and more or less circumstantial report of plots, all of which had to be sifted, the police in 1881 were constantly in receipt of genuine information. In July, 1881, came news from America that infernal machines had been planted in ocean mail ships. The facts were stated by Harcourt in the House of Commons :

“More than three weeks ago the Government received information of the consignment to Liverpool, as being then on their way from America, of a number of infernal machines concealed in barrels of cement. Officers were dispatched from London to Liverpool to await the arrival of the vessels. They reached Liverpool only a few hours before the arrival of the first vessel. The cargoes were accordingly searched in concert with the local police and the Customs’ authorities. In the first vessel six of these machines were discovered in a barrel said to contain cement. Four more were found at a later period in a second vessel concealed in the same manner. The machines consisted of metal boxes divided into two compartments, the upper part containing a six hours’ clock-work movement, so arranged as to ignite the detonator to be subsequently inserted, and which would communicate with the lower compartment, which contained eleven cartridges, each charged with three ounces of nitro-lignine, which resembles dynamite. It is of a highly dangerous character of the nature of gun-cotton. The ten boxes each contained a charge of over two pounds of this explosive

material. One of the barrels of cement contained in all nearly a stone weight of this nitro-lignine compound. It is impossible to estimate the fatal effects of even an accidental concussion of such material. Every resource is being of course employed to discover the consignees in England and the consignors in America of these machines."

After this official statement, any parcel left in a clubroom or forgotten in a railway carriage became an object of fear and suspicion, and in the facts known there was just enough to make the alarm not absolutely fantastic. Nothing was allowed to break Vincent's rule of writing to his mother on Sunday. On the morrow of the Phoenix Park murders, the Director of Criminal Investigations found time to send her a full account of the scene which he had witnessed :

"There was last night a small reception at the Admiralty to meet the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. I arrived at eleven exactly, and had just thrown my coat on a chair when the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress came in. I congratulated them on the great success of the opening of Epping Forest by the Queen for the public benefit, and the Lord Mayor especially on his equestrian feats. I turned and saw Sir William Harcourt had just arrived. I went up to him and said how splendidly everything had passed off, and how fortunate it was that the Queen's apprehensions were proved to have been unfounded. He looked very grave, and taking me by the arm to a corner whispered that Mr. Burke, the Permanent

Under-Secretary, and Lord Frederick Cavendish, the just-appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, had been murdered, and showing me the Government dispatch stating that they had both been shot. Mr. Burke killed at once, and Lord Frederick since dead. Lord Northbrook was called to a private room and told the terrible news, and then Lord Hartington, Lord Frederick's brother. It was settled that none of the company should be told, but there were very few people, and the conferences between the three Cabinet Ministers and myself were soon noticed, and all thought there was some news of heavy import. Mr. Forster arrived and was quietly told. He left at once, as also Lord Hartington and Sir William Harcourt. The Duke of Edinburgh presented me to Her Royal and Imperial Highness, and I had some conversation with the recently arrived Nawab.

"The Austrian Embassy, where Sir William Harcourt had been dining when the telegram arrived, had managed to glean a portion of the news and spread it. Count Bismarck told me, and I gave him an evasive answer. Ladies clustered round me. I smiled, and said I didn't know anything. But somebody had told Mrs. Gladstone—I only asked her where the Prime Minister was—and she sank down on a chair. I went over to Scotland Yard. The Inspector on duty had left for my house with the Police dispatch. I telephoned there, and found he had already left for the Admiralty. I went there and found him with this message :

"Chief and Under-Secretaries murdered in Phoenix Park between 7 and 8 this evening by six

men, common-looking, with soft hats, not better described. Daggers only used. Assassins escaped.'

"I went over to the office and sent telegrams for special officers to be there at 4 a.m. to watch in the Irish mail, and telegraphed to all the principal towns. Then to 10 Downing Street. Mr. Gladstone was out, but in the Private Secretary's room (Mr. Hamilton) was Miss Gladstone, sitting with her head in her hand. I went to 21 Carlton House Terrace, Lord Frederick's house. There, Mr. Gladstone, Lord Granville, Lord Hartington, Lady Louisa Egerton, brother and sister of the murdered man, Mrs. Gladstone, and subsequently Miss. I told them the latest news, and advised them as to what had better be done; wrote telegrams to Lord Spencer and the Duke of Devonshire and Com<sup>r</sup> of the Dublin Met. Police asking on behalf of the widow, who was lying wholly prostrate, if the features were recognisable, and if he saw any objection to her coming over. They were most grateful, and Mr. Gladstone, who bore it splendidly though terribly affected, shook me by the hand and said he could never thank me enough. Lord Granville was half in tears. Lord Hartington, weeping terribly, and Miss Gladstone in a corner too miserable to speak. Mrs. Gladstone was very fine. Then to Sir William Harcourt, back to Scotland Yard to see that all my orders had been carried out, then, at 2 a.m., to the Marlborough to tell the Prince of Wales, and then to bed and serious thought.

"Sunday. This morning I was up betimes, telegraphed to Mr. Anderson, who has had charge of the

Irish business, to come and see me. He came, but could suggest nothing. I went with Henderson to see the Secretary of State. There was nothing to be done. Lord Spencer had telegraphed that he was sending over Captain Ross of Bladensburg with dispatches. I went to Lady Spencer to ask her to send him to Grafton Street as soon as he arrived. She had just heard of Lord Spencer's triumphal entry yesterday—the most enthusiastic there has ever been, and was packing to join him in his difficult task. Then to Lady Frederick Cavendish's, saw Mrs. Gladstone and Lady Louisa Egerton. Sent a telegram for them asking that Lord Frederick's body might be forwarded direct to Chatsworth as soon as the Inquest was over. Then to the Irish Office to take Mr. Johnson, the Attorney-General, to Sir William Harcourt, calling on the way at the Senior to see if Col. Hillier, the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary, who came over last night on leave just before it all happened, was there, but failed to find him. At the Home Secretary's, Lord Carlingford, Mr. Forster, and Lord Granville had met. Early in the afternoon a telegram from Dublin arrived to say that Captain Greatorox of the Dragoon Guards had seen a drunken struggle as he thought, and as the men passed him driving away, he said you've treated them very roughly, to which they replied, yes—very roughly. He thinks he can identify one, and the keeper of the Lodge gate through which they passed also one.

“At 2.30 a special edition of the *Observer* came out, with full details, saying that Lord Frederick had, as Captain Talbot's morning telegram said, died



instantaneously from a stab in the left lung, but that Mr. Burke had struggled hard, had his throat terribly cut, and his face gashed. I called at the Irish Office; Mr. Johnson and Sir Henry were going over the Bill, which doubtless the Government will now introduce to-morrow. I called in Carlton House Terrace and saw Mr. Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll, and told them that the body could not be sent to Chatsworth until after the Inquest. The Cabinet met in Downing Street at 3. At 3.30 Sir William Harcourt sent for me, on a telegram from Lord Spencer that great trouble was feared if Davitt, who was released yesterday from Portland, came to Ireland. Unfortunately, I had gone to Marlborough House to tell the Prince of Wales the full details, and Williamson had to go instead. Arrangements were made to ascertain who went to Ireland to-night. In the Coffee-room at the Westminster Palace Hotel a man rushed up to Davitt who was having luncheon with two Home Rule Members, and brandishing his stick called them a pack of assassins.

“P.S.—11.30 p.m. Seen the Home Secretary twice since the Cabinet. Mr. Forster’s offer to go to Dublin has been declined. . . . Urged very strongly on the Home Secretary the offer of a gigantic reward. Am to see him at 10 to-morrow.”

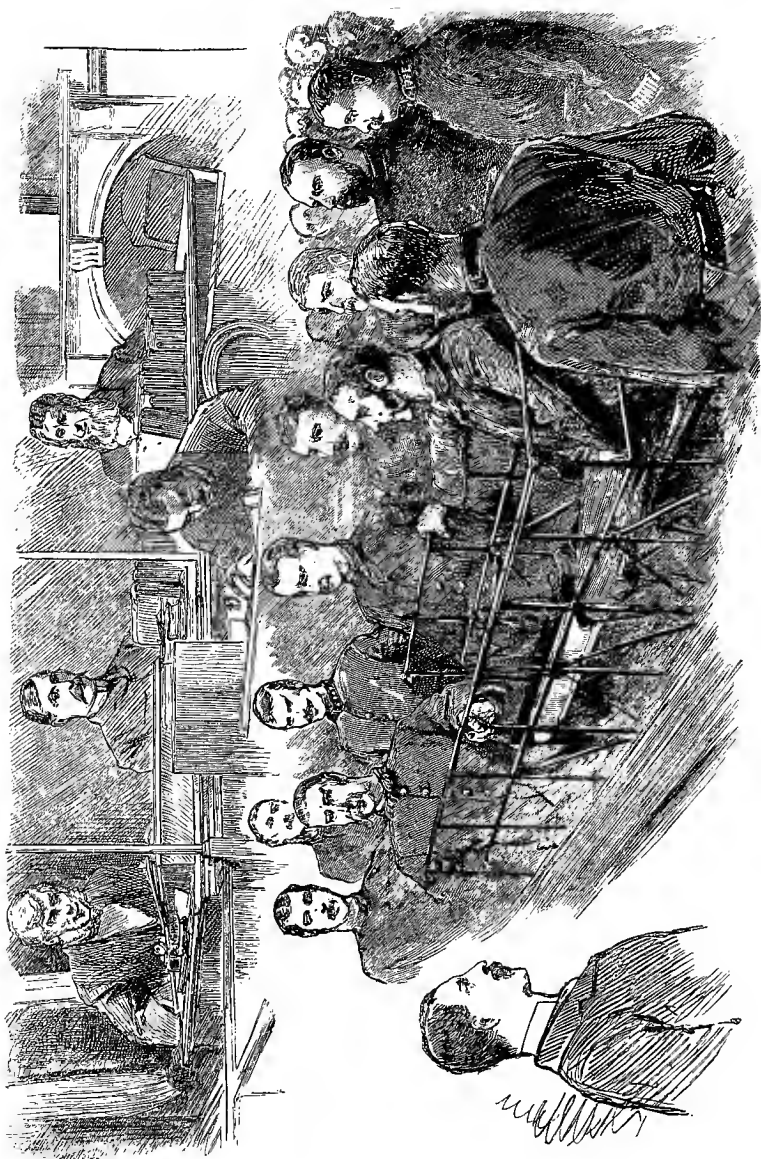
Vincent, of course, volunteered to go to Dublin, but could not be spared from Scotland Yard. A special legislation justifying arrest on suspicion and private interrogation, coupled with large rewards, produced

the desired result, and in little more than twelve months after the commission of the crime the five principal perpetrators had been identified, convicted, and hanged. But to the disgrace of the authorities concerned, the informer James Carey was murdered at sea in the S.S. *Melrose* while on his way from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

On May 11 Davitt, who had again been released on licence, called at Scotland Yard to recover the property taken from him on his arrest, and, being interviewed by Vincent, offered to give him what help he could in regard to the murders. Davitt, we read, was an engaging personality, and the offer, no doubt, sincere. Afterwards, in the House of Commons, the two men were on quite friendly terms.

On May 23, 1882, Davitt returned to Ireland, and (so Lord Spencer wrote to Vincent) had behaved very well in Dublin. He had kept aloof from all demonstrations and newspaper reporters, and went to Kilkenny.

In certain quarters Vincent was sharply criticised for having caused the arrest of Thomas Walsh, of Clerkenwell, on a charge of treason-felony. On August 9 the prisoner was convicted at the Central Criminal Court, and sentenced by Mr. Justice Stephen to seven years' penal servitude. The overt acts proved against him were procuring large quantities of arms and ammunition in London and transmitting them to Ireland to be used for the resistance of the authorities in that country, and disturbing the Queen's peace. Incidentally the jury had to decide, as determining the prisoner's guilt, whether the state



THE MURDERER OF CAREY BEFORE THE MAGISTRATE  
*By kind permission of the Proprietors of the "Graphic," September 22, 1883*



of affairs in Ireland amounted to a treasonable conspiracy. It was shown that seditious proclamations had been issued, that armed men had been drilled in a military fashion, and that in some cases the Fenian oath had been administered. For some time past the prisoner had been watched by the police, and it seemed clear that he was but a subordinate. There was, however, no evidence, in spite of certain wantonly foolish acts, that he had been merely an innocent dupe.

Passing reference has already been made to the attempt to blow up Government offices in Charles Street in 1883. A detailed account of the happenings is given by Vincent :

“A determined attempt was made to blow up the Government offices in Charles Street, Westminster. I was in the library in Grosvenor Square just thinking of going to bed after a very harassing day, when a loud explosion occurred. The constable always on duty outside my house said that it undoubtedly came from the direction of the Houses of Parliament, and in a moment the private telegraph spelt out the words — ‘Come at once.’

“I put on an overcoat and drove to Scotland Yard at a gallop. Parliament Street was full of people ; every window had been smashed, but, wonderful to say, no one was injured. Undoubtedly a considerable quantity of nitro-glycerine had been deposited inside the balustrade of the Local Government Office, and ignited by a time fuse. Charles Street is an unfrequented thoroughfare, and badly lighted. Almost at the same time a small canister containing some

explosive had been fired at the *Times* office. Although King Street police-station was directly opposite the Local Government Board, some time necessarily elapsed before a sufficient force could be collected to clear away the crowd. The latter was reinforced by the House of Commons, and nearly all the Ministers, besides H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, who had been listening to the debate, and the entire Press gallery. This greatly hampered the police, and it was a good hour before I could get any connected account of what had taken place. The search of the premises had also to be made with the greatest care, as it was impossible to say if more explosive material were not about. It was also pitch-dark, for the gas-pipes had been broken, and very cold.

“When at length the necessary preliminaries were over, and I had done everything possible on the spot with Inspectors Jarvis and Moore, it was irritating to be detained for more than an hour in the Home Secretary’s room considering the steps to be taken for the future, instead of being allowed to get to work at once in following the clues which suggested themselves.

“Happily, in less than a month we made six arrests, and of these four, Thomas Gallagher, Alfred Whitehead, Henry Wilson, and John Curtin were sentenced by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge to penal servitude for life. The ringleader was Thomas Gallagher, an American medical man, and his arrest was effected with the greatest courage by Inspector Roots and two or three officers, who surprised him in his lodgings. They had come over from the United

States in February, and after visiting Glasgow, established a nitro-glycerine factory in a house in Jedsame Street, Birmingham. It was thence conveyed to London in india-rubber bags, the conspirators acting under the direction of Doctor Gallagher, who was staying at the Charing Cross Hotel. The narrative is simple enough, but the connection with the plot of all the prisoners, men possessed of means and apparently committing no offence, and their simultaneous arrest, with proof of their guilt, involved many weeks of ceaseless labour, many risks, and many disappointments.

"But the public was not sparing of praise. On Monday, April 9, Sir William Harcourt introduced the Explosive Substances Bill in the House of Commons, and passed it that day through all its stages in the Lower House. On the Tuesday it went through all its stages in the House of Lords and received the Royal Assent that night.

"At the end of March, 1883, a large number of extra military guards and sentries was established to assist the police in guarding public buildings. A new officers' guard was placed at Somerset House, a guard of seventeen men was placed on the Courts of Justice. The Guard in Whitehall was doubled and sentries were put on all the Government offices, and the Queen's Guard at St. James's and at Buckingham Palaces were augmented."

This made the duty heavy for the military, but for the police it was all but unbearable, and Vincent confesses that he got thoroughly worn out and weary.

## CHAPTER VIII

### VINCENT AS HOST AND HIS MARRIAGE

NO sooner had Vincent obtained a settled income than he began to indulge his genius for hospitality. In a very short time his little dinners for men in Ebury Street, followed by smoking parties, began to figure in the social newspapers. He had a passion for knowing people who had done things. In the lists of his guests we find many more names of persons distinguished in action or art than of the noble and fashionable nonentities who as a rule fail to pull their weight in convivial intercourse. It would be absurd to speak of Vincent as a well-read or deeply thinking man, nor could he, one feels, have attained any high personal rank in any of the arts. He had, however, a versatile nature, keen intelligence, indomitable strength of purpose. For acting he had a marked turn; his amateur work as a war correspondent would have done credit to an experienced journalist, and in the easy yet orderly narrative of his letters to his parents there is a plain though perhaps unconscious sense of style. Let anybody who doubts this judgment try his hand at writing out an account of some stirring scene he has witnessed, and then compare the result with Vincent's story of Davitt's arrest, or the announcement in London of the Phoenix Park murders. When after-



wards he took to public speaking, he soon made himself one of the most popular and efficient of platform orators on certain subjects, and even in the House of Commons, in spite of certain peculiarities or defects, he generally obtained respectful attention. There was no doubt amongst honourable members, as amongst the descriptive sketch writers, a tendency to treat him as tedious, but that was chiefly because year after year he kept on hammering away at certain special subjects—Volunteer grievances, the need for a Public Trustee, the Probation of First Offenders, Imperial commerce, fair trade, and other causes which he had taken up and meant to carry through. At first perhaps he courted the society of brilliant and distinguished people; presently they began to court him, yet the hospitality of a young gentleman who merely held the rank of an Assistant Commissioner of Police cannot have been in itself an object of pursuit. The charm of it lay in his talent for organisation, which he applied with as much keenness to making a dinner-party go as to breaking up Fenian conspiracy in England, or advocating a return to fiscal protection. His success as a host was no doubt assisted by his good looks and charming manners, that flow of animal spirits, and his unaffected kindness. He also displayed in private life the rarer qualities of intellectual sympathy, appreciation, and interest. Above all, he was almost prematurely an urbane man of the world.

Although, as we have seen, he began his career upon a very slender allowance, since at that time money was not over-plentiful in his father's house-

hold, he was so far favoured by fortune that he had many more or less influential friends. At the outset he owed nothing to them. It is the way of family friends to be helpful when you have got on without them. But now that Vincent had acquired an honourable and solid position, he found the doors of Society flung invitingly open.

Some acquaintanceships which afterwards ripened to intimacy arose from semi-official or official relations. Often he was consulted by men and women in perplexity or anxiety—the disgrace of a husband or wife, a son or a daughter ; some question of insanity or illegitimacy or blackmail, or even some secret crime with conscience only as accuser. In a certain proportion of these painful difficulties the Director of Criminal Investigations was able to afford relief. A blackmailer, for instance, might generally be disposed of. Most families, Vincent declared, seemed to have some skeleton in their cupboard. As a rule, his advice was “Do nothing, tell nobody—least of all your dearest friend.” If a man or woman kept quiet and made no fuss, the chances are that the truant will return when funds or passion run low. When that has come about, ask the prodigal no questions and make no inquiries. They will not make you happier.

Necessarily in the course of business Vincent was brought into close personal contact with the ambassadors and ministers of all the foreign Courts, and they were delighted to cultivate the acquaintance of an Englishman who was a master of so many languages. He was upon intimate terms with Germans so different in character as Count Munster and Count Herbert

Bismarck, with the leading French politicians and high officials as well as with the Faubourg St. Germain. The representatives of Russia, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Greece could talk to him at their ease as to one who knew their countries and had studied their institutions. Here, it may be seen, was the basis of a rapidly-growing acquaintanceship amongst the very best people in London—the people admitted behind the scenes in diplomatic and literary life, whose conversation upon current events is the nearest thing attainable to first-hand information, if it be judiciously sifted by a man capable of making allowance for personal predilections and professional obligations. In private life, if not in Parliament, Vincent had what one of his official subordinates described as a “rare way with him,” and by his own frankness and expansiveness ingratiated himself into the confidence of the men and women with whom he was brought into social relations. There was something boyish about him when he was most serious, and people talked freely to him as to an ingenuous companion.

Among his gifts was a *flair* for coming greatness. In 1880, when Mr. Chamberlain was regarded even by advanced Radicals as an *enfant terrible*, Vincent, who notes him as “a curious young man,” had invited him to meet the French Ambassador (Challemel-Lacour), Sir William Harcourt, the Comte de Montebello, and M. Coquelin. On another occasion the guest of the evening was Sir Redvers Buller, fresh from the Zulu Campaign, and on every subject full of argument, but when driven into a corner protesting that his trade was soldiering—he knew nothing of politics. Lord Rose-

bery, a kinsman, was an occasional guest. Presently he was taken up by the Prince of Wales (King Edward VII), and entertained by him at one of the famous little dinners which at that time he used to give at the Garrick Club. Vincent made himself so agreeable that a few days afterwards he received an intimation that the Prince would be very happy to dine with him. This (Vincent remarks with pride) was an unexpected and overwhelming honour. The guests selected were the Earl of Fife, Sir Henry Austen Layard, and Sir Frederick Leighton, with a distinguished man of letters, who displayed his somewhat fidgety independence by declining the Royal intimation. The late Duke of Teck, easiest-going of Princes, professed "to be awed by the list of eminent persons whom Vincent had invited to meet him," but added that he "hoped they did not mind smoking." One of the most successful evenings was held in the company of Lord Houghton, most Bohemian of literary peers, Mr. Labouchere, Sir William Russell, and Algernon Borthwick (Lord Glenesk)—all of them hard sitters. At one o'clock the host sent his servants to bed; at two Lord Houghton thought the drawing-room fire should be lighted (it was mid-July); at three they called for grilled bones.

Another interesting friend was Madame Sarah Bernhardt, of whom Vincent writes at some length in his diary :

"She was at once the most fascinating and the most exasperating of creatures. You would call on

her by appointment, and after keeping you waiting for an hour would smooth your wrath by sitting on a cushion at your feet and purring forth the most delightful things. She took a house in Chester Square, and asked me to find a Professeur de Boxe for her son, Maurice, then about twelve or fourteen. I got hold of a prize-fighter, and between them they concocted all sorts of tricks against the French tutor; one of them was to drive with him in a hansom to some low street in the East End and leave him there unable to speak a word of English.

"On a certain Sunday evening, Madame Sarah Bernhardt was to dine with me, and I was to ask all the leading members of the English stage to meet her afterwards. I formed the *parti carré* for dinner with some difficulty, as hardly anybody spoke French well enough for this—Labouchere, Lord Houghton, and Dilke made up the quintette, I think. Mindful of her habit of throwing over people, I did not post the invitations for the evening until 5 p.m. on Saturday; I thought she was quite certain to come then. Five minutes afterwards I received a note:

" 'Mon cher Monsieur—Impossible de me rendre chez vous demain. On a fixé la répétition pour 7 heures.'

"My indignation can be imagined. I protested, and she said to me, 'Essayez d'arranger l'affaire avec M. Mayer.' I could not find him until 8 a.m. He said the hour could not be altered as most of the company had gone to the country for Sunday. But he promised to hurry on the rehearsal and let her be with

me by 10.30. Then I went to Prince's Gate, where she was living. I was taken upstairs to her bedroom door. She was in her bath. Two maids held the door ajar. Splash. 'Vous viendrez chez moi?' 'Je vous le jure.' Splash. 'Pas plus tard que 11 heures.' Splash. 'Morte ou vivante je serai chez vous pas plus tard que dix heures et demie.'

"The dinner went off all right. The guests came for the evening. Irving, the Bancrofts, the Hares, the Kendals, and many more. I put up the notes I had received from the fair charmer as proof of my bona fides. Eleven came; 11.30; midnight struck, but no Sarah. 'She won't come now,' they said, and began to leave. But at 12.30 a carriage and pair dashed up to the door. Joy. 'Here she is.' Not a bit of it. Only a letter from Sir Algernon Borthwick.

"I was highly incensed, and would not have any communications with her for some time. But we made it up eventually. I rarely passed through Paris without having *déjeuner* with her in the Boulevard Perere, or going to her theatre, and to her dressing-room at the second or third *entr'acte*. To see her old and painted was a disillusion from the *jeune première* one had just seen on the stage with fascinating voice. It is a great mistake to go behind the scenes of a theatre."

Amongst other notabilities who came to Ebury Street may be mentioned such dissimilar persons as Colonel Fred Burnaby, Burton of the "Arabian

Nights," Count Bylandt and Sir Farrer Herschell (afterwards Lord Chancellor).

Here is a letter, the never omitted "Sunday letter home" to his father and mother, written in February, 1882, and joyously dated from Sandringham :

"SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK.

"There is just time, my dearest parents, to send you my usual Sunday greetings before the post goes, and to announce my presence here. My cough still continues and is very annoying, but nothing could be more comfortable, warm, and better appointed than the house. The Prince and Princess are full of kindness and thought and attention. There is no stiffness, and everything is as elsewhere, only much better. We have just been round all the animals, the Princess feeding every horse, beast, and dog just as you do, dear Madre. Lords Aylesford and Marcus Beresford, Dilke, dear old Keppell, Str Villebois and our preacher, Mr. Russell, this morning, æ 87, make up together 230 years, and form the house-party.

"I go up at 7.54 with Dilke.

"Your affectionate son,

"C. H. V."

Vincent was well served by the comic papers, which loved to tilt at him. Seldom did a week pass without reference to the energetic and (so his critics said) fussy Director. A specimen from *Punch* may suffice. It professes to give Mr. Gladstone's diary of a holiday spent at Hawarden :

## "THE DIARY OF A HOLIDAY

"*Monday.*—Came down to Hawarden to spend the Easter recess quietly. Delighted to get away from the House and all its worries. Think I shall enjoy myself. Given orders that under no consideration whatever shall letters be forwarded on to me from Whitehall and Downing Street. Consequently greatly annoyed at receiving a telegram from Howard Vincent, telling me that "The Fenian skirmishers had sentenced me to death." Replied that the whole story had been declared a *canard*. This Howard Vincent admitted, but hinted that 'he was still going to take proper precautions to secure my safety.' Knowing my man, I wish he wouldn't.

"*Tuesday.*—As I expected! When I came down to breakfast this morning found no tea-urn. Detective apologised. He had seized it, thinking it might be an infernal machine! At lunch, when I put my feet under the table, they came in contact with a police constable! The man confused. Admitted that he was acting under the orders of Howard Vincent! Really this kind of thing is intolerable!

"*Wednesday.*—Took a walk in the Park. Thought I heard footsteps and looked round. Came face to face with a whole Division (inclusive of the Reserve) of Metropolitan Police! Very angry! Superintendent apologised. They were obeying the instructions of Howard Vincent! They had been told to follow me about everywhere. Asked if I had any objection to their band accompanying them! Lost my temper!

"*Thursday.*—As I would not be bothered any more,



determined to keep my bed. As the air was chilly, I ordered a fire to be lighted. Result : brought down a detective who had been keeping guard in the chimney !

"*Friday*.—Still in bed. The only place where I can secure peace and quiet. Clumsy footman bringing in the luncheon-tray fell down and broke all my best crockery ! Very much annoyed. On threatening to dismiss him, the man confessed that he was a disguised policeman ! Howard Vincent *means* well, but I do wish he would mind his own business !

"*Saturday*.—Tired of bed. Such a lovely morning that I could not refrain from having a little wood-cutting. Dressed myself and went into the park. Had just taken off my coat and waistcoat when I was suddenly seized, gagged, and handcuffed. Before I could expostulate, I was hurried into a special express train with iron blinds all down, thence into a prison van, and driven off at a gallop to Scotland Yard. When I got there (late at night) I was taken at once into the Private Room of the Director of Criminal Investigation. Howard Vincent profuse in his apologies. He said that there had been some mistake. The fact was his men, seeing me with an axe, and knowing that there were Fenian skirmishers about, had taken me for—— Exploded!!!"

In due course Vincent figured amongst the *World's* "Celebrities at Home," caricatured in *Vanity Fair*<sup>1</sup> and satirised in a *Truth* Christmas Number. In

<sup>1</sup> His mother, Lady Vincent, was charmed with Leslie Ward's gentle malice. "A capital sketch of you," she wrote ; "the likeness most clever. Of course an exaggeration of your salient points, nose, forehead, etc., but leaving you such a gentleman that I value it all the more for the wonderful look of you."

these evidences of importance he delighted, for he possessed what is the happiest of a public man's qualifications, a pleasant sensitiveness towards praise with a tough integument quite impervious to censure.

In 1882 he received, what was at that time the honour most coveted by men about town, election to the Marlborough Club on the Prince of Wales's nomination. Shortly afterwards he was placed in the somewhat painful position of refusing one of His Royal Highness's requests. The Prince was anxious to make a tour of the East End, visiting the casual wards, common lodging-houses, and thieves' kitchens. Undoubtedly the project was, in 1882, somewhat dangerous. Both the Fenians and the foreign Anarchists were aggressively active, and if word got about of the Prince's intention an attack might be made on his life. Vincent declined to assume responsibility without the express sanction from the Home Office. Sir William Harcourt put the proposal before the Cabinet, and an adverse decision was reached. It was Vincent's part to communicate the decision to the Prince, who, however, took it quite good-humouredly.

Though Vincent could no longer spare himself much time for travelling abroad—his briefest absences were jealously noted by the unfriendly newspapers—he spent November of 1881 in Spain and Portugal. His cousin, the Duke of Hijar, was one of the Court Chamberlains in Madrid, and through his influence the visitor was granted an audience by King Alfonso XII and Queen Christine. On his way back through Paris, where he was almost as well known as in London, he was seized upon by some of the more





LADY VINCENT

lively journals and interviewed at length. One of them, wishing to pay a compliment to the English head detective, represented him as saying that he secured the conviction of a notorious criminal by employing a handsome agent to get into the good graces of the fellow's mistress. Needless to say, the interview was purely fictitious, but Vincent notes that he was put to a great deal of trouble in repudiating the compliment so well intended to his abnormal acuteness.

In July, 1882, formal announcement was made in the newspapers of Vincent's engagement to Ethel, daughter of the late George Moffatt, M.P., of Goodrich Court, Herefordshire. The Paris *Figaro* remarked: "La fiancée a vingt-et-un ans, est fort jolie et très riche, ce que ne gâte rien. Le mariage sera célébré vers la fin d'Octobre à Westminster Abbey. Toute la noblesse d'Angleterre assistera à cette cérémonie." As a matter of fact, the wedding was held on October 26 at St. Peter's, Eaton Square. The bride's father had been a well-known Liberal, who sat successively for Honiton, Ashburton, Dartmouth, and Southampton. He was a staunch friend and supporter of Cobden, and at this time, as will appear, Vincent himself, though not an ardent politician, was inclined to Liberalism, and certainly had not questioned Free Trade doctrines.

One of Vincent's first letters of congratulation was a pencilled note from the late Duke of Teck at Kensington Palace, who himself attended the ceremony, which was performed by the Bishop of London (Dr. Temple). Amongst the public men present were

Sir William Harcourt, Vincent's official chief, and Richard Cross, the ex-Home Secretary, while the Metropolitan Bench and Scotland Yard were amply represented. After the ceremony about five hundred friends were entertained at 103, Eaton Square. In a tent erected by special permission in the Square Garden, all the inspectors and superintendents of the police were entertained, also a number of children from the Police Ophanage. The honeymoon was spent at Stoke d'Abernon, in Surrey, a place which for centuries had been the seat of the Vincent family. In the early part of December, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent returned to London and took up their quarters at his old home in Ebury Street, the scene of so many festive bachelor parties, until their new house in Grosvenor Square should be ready for occupation. A charming letter was received by Vincent from Mr. Gladstone, but none was more highly valued by bridegroom and bride than the following from John Bright :

" I ASH,

" ROCHDALE,

" *August 17, 1882.*

" Dear Mr. Vincent,

" My brother-in-law, Mr. Vaughan, of Bow Street, told me of your good fortune, and now I am glad to have the confirmation of it from your pen. Anything that interests the children of my old friend, Mr. Moffatt, must interest me. For many years I shared his friendship and his hospitality. He was with me at the bedside of our mutual friend, Mr. Cobden, when he was taken from us, and we grieved together over the great loss we had sustained.

"I met Mr. Moffatt's two daughters a year ago at the house, I think, of Mr. Baden-Powell. It was quite a pleasure to see them—and I am sorry incessant worry during the session has caused me, not to forget them, but postpone calling upon them.

"And now as regards one of them, when I see her again it must be under another name—but one, I trust, which many years of happiness may endear to her.

"As to Parlt, and your coming to join the multitude there, I can hardly congratulate you if you succeed. I have been thirty-nine years in the House of Commons, and now grieve at the almost impossibility of doing anything useful, and find the best and most Liberal Government we have ever had, have blundered into a foreign policy which may fairly compete with the worst doing of their predecessors.

"I am almost driven to bury myself from all that is going on—as if Ireland were not mischief enough—we must rush into more on pretences which are not worth listening to.

"But let this pass . . . if I lament what is doing in public affairs. . . . I may congratulate you on your prospect of happiness—which I do most heartily. Pray tell the young lady how much I wish her happiness, and that she may go to her new home 'with Heaven's benediction upon her.'

"Believe me, very truly yours,

"JOHN BRIGHT.

"Howard Vincent, Esq.,

"London.

"Your signature is a puzzle I cannot hope to solve."

Of this marriage, which entirely altered Vincent's position in the world, since it enabled him to devote himself presently to the public causes in which he and his wife were equally interested, it is sufficient to say here that it increased his energy and stimulated his determination to make himself a name in the world.



## CHAPTER IX

### BEGINNING A PARLIAMENTARY CAREER

IT was but natural that the frequent worries and occasional misunderstandings which Vincent had put up with, as being part of the day's work, so long as the pay and prospects were worth that consideration, should seem irksome and intolerable after he had been rendered independent. His position with his official chief had from the outset been anomalous, and with two ordinary men might have generated acute friction. Officially Sir Edward Henderson's subordinate, he was consulted behind his chief's back. It was to Vincent that the Home Secretary referred for advice and even for formal reports, while in public estimation Scotland Yard was represented by the Director of Criminal Investigations, not by the Commissioner of Police. Henderson, however, was a good-humoured and, to tell the truth, somewhat indolent man—quite capable, if stirred to action, of dealing with a crisis, but slow to foresee one. He was well content to be spared trouble by a subordinate who was a glutton for work and avid of publicity. He did not ever resent being pushed on one side, as practically he was when the Fenian troubles arose, the administration in Great Britain being exclusively entrusted to Vincent, while Mr. Robert Anderson, first charged

with the Secret Service Department, was told off to direct the Irish side of the business, and so scrupulously interpreting his commission that nobody, not even the Home Secretary, knew what he was doing or had in mind. Here were all the materials for departmental squabbles, but Henderson was so amiable, Anderson such a good comrade, Vincent with all his restlessness so tactful, and Harcourt, in spite of his tempers, so placable, that a system which was in defiance of all systems operated without any grave personal hitch. Still, it was not efficient, or satisfactory. Moreover—what to Vincent was, perhaps, the worst objection—it offered no prospect of advancement. The only post open to his ambition was the Commissionership, and that was not likely to be vacant. A change could only be made in the event of some official collapse, and then, as Harcourt frankly said, public opinion would probably demand the introduction of new blood. Early in 1883, therefore, Vincent decided to take leave of Scotland Yard, and communicated his intention to the Home Secretary. His resignation, however, was deferred for more than a year, because giving it immediate effect would have been inconvenient to the Home Office.

Vincent's retirement (July, 1884) was marked by many letters of personal friendship, as well as official expressions of regret and gratitude from ambassadors and ministers of foreign Powers which he had assisted either by protecting their sovereigns in London, or by watching against anarchists' plots. His services were handsomely recognised in a message from the Queen, but Mr. Gladstone, still

harbouring his grudge, declined to act on Sir William Harcourt's advice and recommend him for the Bath. Professional tributes came in plenty from the Treasury, the London police magistrates, chairmen of Quarter Sessions, Chief Constable, the heads of the Detective Services in several great European capitals, as well as from various charitable organisations with which his duties had brought him in contact. But what he most cared about was a striking demonstration of good will amongst the men with whom he had been working for nearly six years. In that time he had carried out an extensive reorganisation, which must have irritated some members of the staff and injured others. But the general feeling towards the departing Director was shown at his farewell meeting, first in his own room with the superintendents of Divisions, and afterwards at the United Service Institution, with all the members of the detective department who could be spared to attend. He had gained popularity without forfeiting respect. That he meant what he said when he professed a lasting affection for the force was afterwards to be proved by his constant and successful efforts in Parliament to defend its good name and promote its interests. It was not likely that his period of office would escape criticism in the Press, but the newspapers which took the least favourable view of his work could not deny that during his time the more serious offences had become notably less prevalent, while the police had been thoroughly purged of corruption and blackmailing. If he had not altogether succeeded in preventing Fenian and anarchist outrages, or detecting all that were com-

mitted, all reasonable persons would admit that he had to deal with criminals of exceptional skill and daring, organised, financed, and directed by a secret power which English law gave him no such means of suppressing as are enjoyed by every other police in the civilised world. Vincent never complained of the limitations under which he laboured. Indeed, he was of opinion that English results on the whole may be compared favourably with the best attained abroad. Unquestionably, however, the tradition in this country of straining every point in favour of accused and suspected persons does handicap the police when they are confronted by the higher forms of crime. On several occasions Vincent, being well versed in foreign procedure, thought it his duty to insist upon the drawbacks of English methods, but he did not ask or desire that they should be remodelled on continental lines. He had found them tolerably efficient, and knew that public opinion here would not tolerate, except in the gravest crises, resort to such expedients as preventive arrest and private examination of accused persons, confrontation, and reconstruction of the crime. His record at Scotland Yard was by general consent one upon which he could look back with satisfaction, and certainly after his departure the tendency of things was not towards improvement.

On June 13, 1884, Sir William Harcourt wrote a graceful farewell.

“ It is with the greatest regret that I learn that the moment is so near at hand when our official relations,

which have been so agreeable to me, and I hope not otherwise to you, are to terminate.

"You have had a long spell of arduous and delicate work in which you have shown high qualities of temper and intelligence, and have known how to work not only with subordinates, but with equals. Times have been trying, and we have escaped without any great disaster. I know by experience the anxiety attaching to the matters over which you have had immediate charge, and can easily appreciate the desire for rest, which I myself largely share.

"I wish you and yours all success and happiness in your new life, and I hope we may often meet in pleasanter places than Scotland Yard or the War Office."

Before he had said good-bye to official life he had let it be known that he was bent upon going into Parliament. At this time his associations were distinctly Liberal. Though he owed his late appointment to a Conservative Minister, it was under a Liberal regime at the Home Office that he had experienced the greater measure both of personal kindness and official encouragement. Mr. Cross's closing period had been preoccupied with the famous Water Bill, an excellent scheme which might have been amended into an admirable settlement, but was killed by cleverly organised declamation. Its author had no thought for other matters than to save, if possible, a proposal in which the fate of the Government seemed to be involved. Sir William Harcourt, on the contrary, almost from his first day at the Home Office, was

taken up with police matters. In this way an intimacy sprang up between chief and subordinate which could not but leave a strong effect on the younger man. Allowance being made for a quick temper and rasping tongue, Harcourt was a man who in private life exercised a singular fascination over young people, while in point of intellect and attainment he ranks as equal with the most famous of English statesmen. To Vincent he showed most remarkable kindness which his irritable outbursts did nothing to counteract. His influence, therefore—that of trained and powerful intelligence over one unformed and impressionable—might well have turned Vincent towards Liberalism if other conditions had not been uniting in the same direction. We have already seen the young subaltern in Ireland coquetting with Home Rule. He had now married the daughter of a well-known Liberal Member of Parliament.

It would be misrepresenting Vincent's character to suggest that in 1883-4 he had worked out for himself any of the fundamental questions in party politics. The hardest of workers, he had never left himself time either for reading or thinking, but with unerring exactness he could see what was in front of his eyes—a vision sometimes withheld from the philosophical onlooker. At present Vincent regarded politics simply as a means of getting into Parliament. If in these high-toned days that he reckoned a sordid motive, it may be mentioned that politicians who are esteemed as pillars of public rectitude and make higher claims than ever he put forward, have in their noviciate entertained or even solicited office from

both parties. This Vincent did not do, but at the end of 1883, under Harcourt's auspices, he entered into negotiations with Lord Richard Grosvenor, afterwards Lord Stalbridge, and then Chief Liberal Whip. At that time, he said, it looked as though the Conservative party had been finally wiped out. One cannot blame an inexperienced politician for believing in 1883 the same sort of nonsense as was talked and written by people who should know better, a few years later about Liberalism and nearly thirty years afterwards again about Unionism. In 1883, it is certain, things looked very bad for Conservatism. Ministers had got over their Bradlaugh trouble and seemed to be living down Majuba. The worst of their foreign embarrassments—Gordon in the Sudan and the Russians at Penjdeh—had not yet declared themselves. Meantime, Sir Stafford Northcote with Mr. W. H. Smith and Mr. Cross were being made uncomfortable by Lord Randolph Churchill and the other members of the Fourth Party. It seemed no time for an aspiring politician to throw in his lot with a disorganised and seemingly desperate party. Overtures were made to Vincent from Windsor and Maidstone, as well as from Wallingford, where he was locally assured that "the Morrison interest would be sure to win"—his wife being closely connected with that family. His reason for declining what would otherwise have been a desirable seat was that the borough was practically certain to be extinguished under the forthcoming Redistribution of Seats Bill. The prospect of fighting the City of Westminster was far more tempting. Mr. W. H. Smith, no doubt, was unassailable, but the second seat might

be won, as Vincent had personal associations with the place. He was an "Old Westminster," and as commanding officer of the Queen's Westminsters had already made himself popular. At St. George's Vestry he had, while serving on the Disorderly House Committee, done some useful work. At a cost of about £250 he had got rid of eighty-five places of ill-fame in Pimlico. He stood up, however, for the police, against the charge of slackness in this respect and even of collusion. He explained in the Press that their powers were limited by law. Otherwise they would quickly make an end of street scenes not witnessed in any other capital. But on their own motion they could not take action against the most notorious establishment. They had to wait for the assistance of the local authority and "two householders paying rates." A deputation was sent from the Liberal Executive and Committee of Selection. Complete endorsement of the Oaths Bill and disestablishment of the Church, with reduction of armaments and oversea responsibilities, were amongst the demands pressed on the contemplated candidate. But he could neither endorse this programme nor work with such cranky politicians—especially as he would be expected to "pay everything and, apparently, everybody." He thanked them, therefore, for their offer, and regretted that he could give no further answer till nearer the General Election and after his projected trip round the world.

He had decided to attach himself to the Moderate wing of the Liberal party, and on December 11, 1883, he wrote a long letter to Mr. Goschen (the late Lord Goschen) explaining his position and asking for



his advice. The reply has not been preserved, but four days later Vincent was still in treaty with the Liberal Whips, though not with the Local Association, as to standing for Westminster. Soon afterwards, however, he wrote to a leading man in Westminster that he definitely abandoned the idea, and informed the Chief Liberal Agent, saying that his views as to Parliament had "undergone a considerable modification." The Central Office was greatly displeased, and Lord R. Grosvenor several times came to see him, but failed to shake his determination. On February 14, 1884, he had made up his mind, he wrote, that he could not stand as a Radical.

It was at the beginning of July, 1884, that Mr. and Mrs. Vincent started for their journey round the world. The Canadian-Pacific Railway not having been completed, the travellers had to proceed viâ the United States. On arriving at New York they were at once captured by waiting interviewers who wished to make copy for Irish-American readers. Already the Head-Centre of the Dynamite Brotherhood had announced that Vincent's object was to spy on their organisation. He had given out that he was starting for Egypt and hoped to reach New York *incognito*. But they had been too clever for him. One of his agents had recently tried to enlist with them, but Professor Mezzroff had detected the plot.

"He had arrangements made for a good night's fun at his expense. He has often attempted to be initiated on the other side, but as every circle has a portrait of him he was not successful. Come and see me when

the *Germanic* is sighted, and I shall send a man with you to the dock who will point him out to you, or go myself."

"Will you keep posted on his movements here?"

"Indeed we will, in spite of his numerous disguises and flexibility of tongue in a variety of dialects. He will be shadowed from the moment he leaves the vessel. Indeed, he is already under the watchful eye of at least one of our detectives."

Professor Mezzroff was next seen in his West Side laboratory.

"Be cautious," he said, as the reporter entered; "there are some bombs lying around not quite dry yet. What brings you here at this hour? I divine the object of your visit. I could have told you about Vincent's projected trip here a week ago. He has become desperate since I detected his emissary in the ruse to get initiated. He hoped that by coming here he should get at the secret of the Scotland Yard explosion and immortalise himself. There never was anything that paralysed the detective force there so much as that surprise."

"Do you expect to see Vincent when he comes?"

"I do, and I shall invite him to my laboratory. I know him, as well as two or three of his special agents in this city, who consider themselves completely disguised. When he comes, I will take you around some night and show you how the game of counter-detective is played."

This pleasing fairy-tale Vincent endeavoured to explain away—without much success. Having come

out for pleasure, he excused himself from answering questions about Scotland Yard with which he was no longer related. "In regard to Irish outrages"—persisted the Interviewer. "Oh, sir," Vincent was fabled to reply, "that is a doleful subject. But hark!"—as the sweet cathedral music floated into the sunlit room—"is not that message of peace and goodwill towards men very applicable to the present moment?"

Not quite in Vincent's style; but at Boston he made a systematic study of the Massachusetts Protection of Offenders' System, which had been instituted two years before by a former superintendent of police. The plan was to defer operation of a sentence (for minor offences) until a period of probation should have elapsed. Vincent was so well pleased with the results already attained in America (reformation of about 85 per cent of the persons thus treated) that on this journey he recommended the experiment to the various Colonial Governments, and in the House of Commons made it the basis of his First Offenders' Act (1887), to be followed twenty years later by a larger Government measure.

It is not necessary here to follow the young couple's journey, which has been vividly described by Lady Vincent in her *Forty Thousand Miles over Land and Water*, published for the benefit of the Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage, in which her husband took a warm interest. After reaching Niagara they passed on to Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec. Amongst the politicians with whom Vincent conversed was Mr. Blake, the leader of the Liberal Opposition

in the Canadian House of Commons. He regarded Imperial Federation as essential to maintenance of the Empire. When Canada and Australia had time to turn from their domestic affairs, they would no longer submit to having their foreign relations settled in England under a system which gave them no representation. Mr. Blake was for reducing the Canadian tariff and offering differential terms to Great Britain, though a plan could not easily be worked out. Mr. Mackenzie was of much the same mind as to Imperial Federation, adding that the Canadians strongly resented the view of men like Mr. Bright about the colonies. Otherwise, they were in complete accord at present with the British Government. No responsible man would advocate either independence or fusion with the United States. Mr. Goldwin Smith, on the other hand, looked on annexation as Canada's manifest destiny. His opinion of Mr. Gladstone was summed up. "Absolute ignorance of foreign and colonial affairs; total indifference to the welfare of transmarine Britain; obstinate refusal to gain any information which might run counter to his own preconceived idea; all themes to be squared with his projects for his own aggrandisement and maintenance in power." Everywhere, it should be noted, Vincent had a good Press. He was sufficiently a man of note to have his comings and goings chronicled in the newspapers. Instead of seeking publicity he could already make a favour of granting interviews. His taking the trouble to study colonial questions on the spot, observe the conditions on the spot, and make acquaintance with the leading poli-

ticians were generally commended. In some cases, of course, he was the subject of unfavourable criticism, but that did not impair the general effect of his successive receptions.

Travelling quietly through the United States and visiting the places of chief interest, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent did not embark from San Francisco until August 29, and reached Auckland on September 21, where they visited the Governor (Jervoise). They coached across the North Island, there being no railways in those days. After making a tour of the South Island they arrived, a month later, at Melbourne, where they talked freely with Graham Berry (an advanced democrat) and most of the other leading public men in the colony. After a stay in New South Wales and Queensland, they passed within the Barrier Reef to Batavia and the Straits Settlements. On January 5, 1885, they set foot in India. Five weeks later they were on their homeward way through Egypt, and reached London in the middle of March.

During his absence Vincent had been elected (December, 1884) a member of the Westminster Liberal Association. It was time to rectify his awkward position. His visit, transitory as it was, to British possessions oversea, his conversations with the leading people and chance acquaintances, his observation of public feeling and political tendencies amongst Englishmen outside England, had turned him into an ardent Imperialist. With Imperialism, as he understood it, the Liberalism of the Gladstone Government of 1880-5 was clearly inconsistent.

Leaving out all question as to its Soudan policy, he could not co-operate with the party which less than a year before he had intended to join. On this point his mind had been made up some time before his return. On October 10 he had written a long letter to Sir Stafford Northcote, relating his past negotiations with the Liberal Whips. His experience of colonial feeling, and what he had seen during a brief visit to Egypt in the spring, had converted him altogether from Liberalism. "Throughout the colonies," he wrote, "there is profound distrust of the foreign and colonial policy of the Liberal party." This point he elaborated in some detail, whereas Lord Beaconsfield's policy was regarded with general admiration. Though many of the Moderate Liberals, especially Mr. Goschen, Mr. Forster, and Lord Rosebery, were "opposed to a disintegrating line of action," their position in the party was difficult and insecure. Vincent was, therefore, anxious to enter Parliament as a Conservative, and added that "the labour entailed by a large constituency would be rather agreeable to him than otherwise."

Within a fortnight of his return home he explained his change of views to the Westminster Liberal Association :

"On my return yesterday to London, after prolonged absence, I received your letter of the 4th of December last. You were so good as to inform me thereby that the annual district meeting had done me the honour to elect me a member of the Council of the Westminster Liberal Association. I regret that,

being then in Australia, it was out of my power to communicate with you, and that, failing this, you will have assumed, as your letter tells me, my acceptance of the distinction. I must now, however, with all appreciation of the courteous act, beg you to remove my name from the Council roll. You will recollect that in the conversation I had the pleasure of holding with you last spring, when you informed me that the Parliamentary Committee of the Association would look favourably on my candidature for Westminster at the general election, I was careful to impress upon you that I was a Moderate Liberal—eager, indeed, for all necessary reforms called for by the advance of time, but by no means inclined to be concerned in the overthrow of existing institutions without substantial guarantee of public benefit. Nor did I conceal my inability to understand the attitude of Mr. Gladstone's Administration towards the interest of Great Britain in her Empire beyond the seas, and other places abroad. You were pleased to point out to me that such views were held by many electors on the Liberal registers, but that if a second candidate, acceptable to those holding advanced opinions, was brought forward, their support of a moderate man might be secured on the grounds of expediency. I came to the conclusion, from careful inquiries, that the Radical element formed a not inconsiderable proportion of the Liberal electorate, and that my views were not coincident with theirs on many matters of domestic, colonial, and foreign policy. To seek to represent it upon the basis suggested seemed to be unworthy of the desired trust. I thereupon withdrew my name from the

consideration of the committee, and, undeterred by the offer of another constituency presenting every assurance of success, determined to study personally the serious problems, in distant lands, now before the country. I have come back to England absolutely aghast at the deliberate neglect of British interests in almost every quarter of the globe during the past five years, and with the firm conviction that a continuance of such a policy can only lead to the early overthrow of the unity and commercial prosperity of the Empire, even though it is still the greatest the world has ever seen. Australia, India, Central Asia, South Africa, and, not least of all, Egypt afford more than ample evidence of this lamentable state of affairs. While, moreover, the nation has been humiliated by more than one foreign Power, we have been estranged from valuable allies. Abroad I have seen with my own eyes how much irreparable injury has been and is being done. At home I hear of experienced, far-seeing statesmen like Mr. Goschen and Mr. Forster being severely censured by irresponsible committees of their constituents for endeavouring to dissuade their fellow Liberals from further blighting the present and jeopardising the future of the country. The Council will, therefore, readily understand that one having any pretension to patriotic feeling, and still free, should elect to devote his political life to the national cause of the Conservative Party, which is at least resolved to stand shoulder to shoulder with their countrymen, rich and poor, all the world over for the maintenance of the power of Great Britain and the advancement of the individual welfare of her sons."



Vincent lost no time about getting into party harness. On April 24 we find him at Isleworth addressing the local Conservative Working Men's Club, and gave an account of his own conversion from latter-day Liberalism.

"Search, gentlemen, into the records of the Conservative party, and you will find many indisputable proofs of the earnestness of their labours, as much for industrial classes at home as for the influence of the British working man abroad. It may seem at first sight inconsistent that with a knowledge of this I should have ever thought of enrolling myself in the ranks of the opposite party in the State. Gentlemen, I am no advocate of party government, but it is, unfortunately, an indispensable condition of our Constitutional system, and cannot be altered. While, however, this is the case, we can at all events do everything we can to aim only in politics at the national good. I confess that, like others, I was dazzled by the promises of Liberal statesmen, and believed they were more anxious to promote the welfare of the people at large. Like you, I was a hard-working man, with little leisure to examine into the details of political life. But before embracing it I determined to see for myself first what were the conditions under which this Empire was placed, and how the Imperial duties incumbent upon it had been discharged by the rival parties. My mind was perfectly clear and unprejudiced. My leanings were undoubtedly to the side of Liberalism. I had nothing to regret in the past, no personal object in the

future. But I had not travelled far in the Englands beyond the seas, I had not seen much of our brothers who have undertaken the advancement of British interests in the farthest quarters of the globe, before I had clear and unmistakable evidence that they had been scandalously treated by the Liberal administrations of recent times, and had alone flourished and felt themselves secure in the days when the far-seeing wisdom of Lord Palmerston and Lord Beaconsfield guided the councils of the British Crown. Canada, New Zealand, Australia, India, South Africa—these form Greater Britain, and they one and all tell the same tale. Gentlemen, I could not associate myself with such policy, for its ends would be the reduction of our country to its narrowest limits. It is coupled, too, with depression in all conditions of life at home. You, fortunately, have already recognised this, and others throughout the country are doing so day by day. I, who hail from the fair North Countree, speak not to win your favour. I speak with the sense of honest conviction. But neither you, nor your friends, nor the party to which we belong, understand Conservatism to be a condition of indifference to progress and to the people. No, this cannot be. We are all anxious to reap all the advantages we can from the age of civilisation in which we have the blessing to live. We seek to extend the trade, to improve the industry of the country, to protect its subjects wherever they may be placed, and peacefully to extend its name and influence. This is the policy of the Conservative—or, it would be far more proper to say, the National party, for Conservative is a name given to it

in recent times, and exceedingly likely to mislead. It does indeed keep many from our midst who have no other desire than to unite themselves with a body which will keep always before it the interests of the nation, not conceived in any narrow spirit, but upon broad lines of liberality, progress, and patriotism."

Naturally, Vincent's change of attitude and the vigour with which he expressed his opinions were sharply attacked in the local newspapers—especially his remark that during his journey through the Empire he had been overwhelmed by the severity and enmity with which Mr. Gladstone's Government was regarded by all Englishmen oversea. He could not find anyone to say a good word for it in any colony or dependency; not a single public institution in Melbourne would accept a portrait of the Prime Minister. While far away in the Bush there was hardly a cabin where he had not found a picture of Lord Beaconsfield. If Australasia had been federated, Vincent told a *Pall Mall Gazette* interviewer, when the news was received of German annexation in the Pacific they would have led to the secession of Australia.

In 1885, it should be noted, Vincent believed that the time had come when Imperial Federation was urgent. The colonists were loyal to the Mother Country, but could not be expected to remain much longer in a state of absolute subjection in all questions of foreign, naval, and military policy.

"And now about India, Mr. Vincent." "Ah, that is another matter. There are many things about India which fill me with grave misgivings, even if Russia does

not advance nearer the Indus than the posts which she now occupies. The importance of India to England is vast, though, I think, perhaps a little overrated. It affords employment for a certain number of our sons, and we do, of course, an enormous trade with the country, but in both capacities what is it to compare with Australia, if one or the other must be given up, which God forbid if British devotion and force of arms can avert such a calamity? It is there, in the free communities with which England is peopling the great Continent in the Southern seas, not in the military empire which we have seized in the midst of millions of men of alien race, religion, and civilisation, that we must look for the true abiding glory of the English name."

The publicity was opportune. Instead of having to look about for a seat he was flooded with offers. No fewer than seventeen Conservative Associations invited him to come forward as their candidate, ten of them being in London or Middlesex. One of them shamelessly jilted a distinguished man of letters who, with scornful humility, retorted that he was not aware of any decline in his personal merits since the day before, when he had been unanimously and enthusiastically adopted as Conservative candidate. But it was not his seat that Vincent agreed to contest.

On April 16 it was announced by Sir Henry Watson, Chairman of the Borough of Sheffield Conservative and Constitutional Association, that Vincent had by telegram formally agreed to stand for the Central Division and represent the national cause of Fair

Trade, industrial prosperity, and British Imperial influence.

[At this point it seems advisable to insert in Mr. Jeyes' account some description of the kind of man whom Central Sheffield was adopting as its candidate. Fortunately it is possible to do this in the words of those who knew him at Sheffield. None knew him better than the people of that city. Here is what one of his warmest friends and supporters, Mr. S. G. Richardson, of Stone Grove, Sheffield, says :

“Prior to 1885 Sir Howard Vincent was a stranger to Sheffield. Under the Reform Act of that year the city was divided into five constituencies, and candidates had to be provided for four of them. The Central Division, as far as could be judged, contained about an equal number of voters of the two political parties, and it was felt that a specially strong candidate on either side would carry the seat. Sir Howard Vincent was approached by the Conservatives, and accepted their invitation to contest the seat, being attracted to it rather than to other offers that had been made to him by its being a constituency mainly of working-men, to whom his sympathies especially went out.

“When it was announced that Mr. S. Plimsoll was to be the Liberal candidate, the hopes of the Conservatives fell to zero, as Mr. Plimsoll was an exceptionally strong candidate, not only because of his being a local man, but also because of his work for seamen, in which he was powerfully supported by the

*Sheffield Telegraph*, the local Conservative newspaper. When, however, Sir Howard Vincent came on the scene it was soon found that he was not merely a very strong candidate like his opponent, but one of quite extraordinary powers of attraction. He simply took the place by storm. The secret of his extraordinary popularity, which began then, and went on growing to the end of his life, was not merely his attractive personality, though that counted for much. It was his keen sympathy with all classes of his constituents, and most of all with the poorest of them, and not merely his willingness, but his desire to help them, in doing which he was genuinely happy and spared himself no pains or trouble. A great natural kindness of heart was at the foundation of his character.

“As a typical illustration of this, it may be mentioned that the last letter he wrote in Sheffield was to a working-man who had been taken into the infirmary to undergo a serious operation. Sir Howard was much grieved when he heard the news, and it is characteristic of him that his grief did not expend itself in words. He at once sat down and wrote a sympathetic letter, taking pains to arrange that it should be delivered just before the operation took place.

“He was also a man of great force of character, who was deterred by no difficulties in pursuing the objects he set himself.

“A notable instance of this is found in the fact that in his first Session of Parliament he faced the ordeal of bringing in a Bill for the Probation of First

Offenders, which introduced a new element into the criminal procedure of the country, and has since been greatly extended.

“He never forgot anything, however trifling it might be. Whatever work came in his way he set about doing it at once. He was a man of unbounded energy. He regarded nothing as too much trouble in any matter, small or great, he had in hand; his whole heart and soul were in his public work, and no other interests were ever allowed to compete with it. Whilst he stood for great causes, nothing was too small for him. He impressed those who came in contact with him, whether they agreed with him or not, as a man in earnest, whom no opposition could turn away from the path he had marked out for himself.”

But it was not only his political supporters whose respect and admiration he secured. Very striking testimony to Sir Howard's sterling qualities is borne by a leader in the opposite camp, Sir Robert Hadfield, who says :

“Although I only knew Sir Howard Vincent well during the latter portion of his life, his personality was one for which I always had much admiration. I differed from him on political and fiscal matters, being a Liberal and Free Trader ; nevertheless, during the whole time he was my colleague on our Board of Directors I never remember a single unkind word passing from him. His untiring energy and perseverance commanded the respect of all on either side of politics. If trouble had to be faced, he had

always a kind word to help one in difficulty. Many times he has said to me, 'Hand it over to me : I will do what I can.' There are not so many in this world who take up an attitude of this kind. His unfailing good temper, even under adverse conditions, was one of his chief characteristics."

Then, thirdly, there is the evidence of the Right Hon. C. B. Stuart-Wortley, M.P., whose political connection with Sheffield dated even further back than that of Sir Howard. He was a colleague in the representation of Sheffield, and had unusual opportunities for obtaining a true insight into the character of Sir Howard Vincent—opportunities which the following brief appreciation shows that he used to the full :

"I have a distinct and favourable impression of being drawn to him, as, with time and closer acquaintance, I came to realise the great simplicity and geniality of character that underlay his manifest desire to shine in the public eye. He was as sincere in everything else as he was in that desire ; with some men that kind of ambition repels. It was not so with him ; for the ambition was quite single-minded, and (if that be not a paradox) was not competitive, and therefore tended to injure none. Directly you approached him he received you spontaneously, with a full measure of the simplicity and good nature that I have before referred to. He loved popularity, indeed ; but he never sought it at the expense of others, and accordingly he never refused to serve or co-operate with anyone who sought



his aid. I could not have wished for a more loyal and helpful colleague, nor for one with a greater mind of shrewd judgment and common sense. These last were always at his colleagues' service in the interest of Sheffield, and his help or advice was given always without afterthought as to who was going to get the popularity."

Mr. Jeyes' account is now continued.]

Before being elected Vincent had made up his mind that one way to retain a constituency was to keep it in good humour.<sup>1</sup> Throughout his long connection with Sheffield he took enormous pains to secure for the towns all the pleasure they could derive from seeing his distinguished friends. At the time Professor Arminius Vámbéry, traveller and scholar, had a considerable vogue in England. It was arranged that he should lecture in Sheffield on April 27, and Vincent was then to support this foreign and famous upholder of British authority in the East.

Next day a meeting was held to form a Conservative and Constitutional Association in the Central Division, and Vincent's candidature was proposed by Mr. Jeremiah Robertshaw, seconded by Mr. John

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the Redistribution Bill, Sheffield became entitled to five seats, in place of the two held respectively by Mr. Mundella (Gladstonian) and Mr. Stuart Wortley (Conservative). As far as could be judged, two of these seats would be safe Conservative ones; two safe Liberal seats. But it was in the Central Division that the fight would concentrate, as neither side could claim a majority there. Vincent was offered "a fair fight," but when subsequently S. Plimsoll was secured as candidate, Vincent himself, and his principal supporters, as they afterwards confessed, thought the chances in his favour *very* small. The majority of 1100, that was subsequently secured at the General Election was, therefore, something of a triumph.

Marshall and unanimously approved. Again he explained his change of party. He dwelt effectively on the abandonment of Gordon, then the principal topic of political discussion, and made an appeal to the local pride of Sheffield. John Arthur Roebuck, a former M.P. and name to conjure with in Sheffield, whose bust he had seen on the steps of the Cutlers' Hall, would, said Vincent, have done the same thing. He would have cut himself away from such Radicalism as was then predominant. Nothing to do with the neglect of Imperial interest, nothing to do with depreciation of trade or the impoverishment of the working-man. Might the spirit of Roebuck guide him to follow in his noble footsteps. But in the Conservatism professed by Vincent there would be nothing stagnant or reactionary. He preferred to speak of the National party, and aimed at the union of all men who shared the views of Palmerston and Roebuck, Goschen and Forster, of Beaconsfield, Salisbury, Northcote, and Randolph Churchill.

No sooner had the candidate settled down to his constituency than he began to hammer away at the cause of Fair Trade. He did not elaborate his plans of fiscal protection, nor is there any available evidence of the reasons that turned the young Liberal of 1884 to advocating in 1885 opinions which the great majority of Conservatives looked upon as reactionary, dangerous, and almost absurd. When Vincent threw in his lot with Fair Trade he can hardly have begun to examine the foundations of the orthodox theory. In that respect, perhaps, he resembles most of the controversialists (on both sides) who twenty-five years

## GENERAL ELECTION, 1885



SIR HOWARD VINCENT IN 1885

### POLL

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 25TH	
VINCENT (C.).....	4633
PLIMSOLL (L.) .....	3484
HAWKES (R.).....	<u>140</u>
Majority .....	<u>1149</u>

Given to every member of the twelve Committees—some 400 in number, with an Autograph signature and expression of thanks—who worked to bring about the result.



later are still wrangling over economic doctrine. At an election trial held last year a witness, cross-examined in his capacity as a voter, stated that such a person in the borough "belonged to Free Trade" and that such another belonged to Tariff Reform. That, no doubt, is the position of most of us, since we have neither time to work out, nor capacity to understand, the statistic of a complex problem. Well, Vincent belonged to Fair Trade. During his tour through the world, from the day of landing at New York to that of setting foot in India, he had probably not met a single Free Trader. He was impressed, according to his notes, with the beneficial results of Protection as he had seen it in operation. Moreover, in Sheffield he was not called upon to preach a new gospel or incur the perils of heresy. The manufacturers had been hit hard, and every day expected to be still more severely damaged, by foreign competition. It was one of the typical manufacturing centres which derived the minimum of profit and suffered the maximum of harm from the Free Imports system. Not for a moment was Vincent in doubt as to the reception of his economic gospel in Central Sheffield as to the candidate's merits. There were, no doubt, many Free Traders in the constituency, but, whatever might have been its results elsewhere, Fair Trade in Central Sheffield, in 1885, was infallible.

Meantime, the Imperial side of Vincent's creed was kept well in view—in Sheffield and elsewhere.

On June 11 he read a long and detailed paper before the Colonial Institute on "The British Empire of To-day," which described the main political features

of the various British Possessions. The purpose of the survey was to plead, as from a sounding board, for Imperial Consolidation. It was his opinion that the initiators should proceed from the Mother Country, and that there was need for the representation of Greater Britain in the Imperial Parliament had been shown by the recent proceedings of France and Germany in the Pacific, Indian Ocean, and South Atlantic, no less than by the apathy in negotiations with the United States as to matters of extradition.

A useful contribution to the electioneering literature of the Sheffield Conservatives was made the same month in the first appearance of the "Howard Vincent Map of the World," with the British Possessions coloured in red, and with these words printed on the back :

"I trust that the day is not far distant when the entire British Empire, with its eight million square miles of territory, its three hundred million inhabitants, its twelve thousand million sterling of wealth, its two hundred and sixty million of yearly public revenue, its eight hundred thousand free soldiers, 'circling the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England,' its thirty thousand ships bearing the trade of the world, may be joined together for all time in one great Imperial Federation. Let all lovers of our common country, whatever station they fill, wherever they may be, labour ceaselessly and to the utmost extent of their influence, to bring about this glorious union of the whole of the British possessions in one vast community for the preservation of



FIFTEEN YEARS IN AND STILL BATTING FREELY

*Sheffield Weekly News, Sept. 29th, 1900*





internal liberty and the extension of commerce. The British people, equal then in national privileges, will be all powerful in their patriotism. God Save the Queen.

“C. E. HOWARD VINCENT.

“Sheffield, *June* 3, 1885.”

This ingenious appeal to national pride was regretfully admired by Liberals, and one leading Ministerial paper confessed that it “envied the Conservative party the possession of a candidate capable of so admirable an expedient.”

On the same day Vincent addressed a great meeting in Sheffield, dividing his speech equally between advocacy of Fair Trade and arraignment of the Government's foreign policy, especially in regard to Gordon's fate in the Soudan, and the recent dangerous mismanagement of affairs in Afghanistan (the Penjdeh incident was still fresh in men's minds). Mr. Gladstone, he said, had come to power on promises of peace, retrenchment, and reform. He had brought about war, ruin, and dishonour.

On September 3 a rousing speech was delivered at Sheffield by Lord Randolph Churchill, and Vincent proposed a vote of confidence in the Salisbury Government. With reference to Ireland, he declared that the kindly and conciliatory administration of Lord Carnarvon was promoting a better feeling by far than had existed there for many years past. At an overflow meeting he developed this point :

“If we cross over the Channel to Ireland, what do we there see? I am visiting every centre of importance in that unfortunate country, and far be it from

me to give at this moment any expression of opinion upon what, believe me, gentlemen, is the most serious problem of the time before the people of the United Kingdom ; but of this I can give personal testimony, that the administration of the present Lord Lieutenant, kindly, considerate, and firm as it is, is doing a great deal more than has been done in past years to win for the English people the sympathy of their Irish brethren. Lord Carnarvon is entrusting his personal safety to the generous nature of the Irish people, and you will readily believe me when I say that it affords him protection more sure than all the armed cohorts of soldiers and police. The Land Purchase Act has given satisfaction to landlords and tenants alike, and it is an earnest, I think, of the sincere desire of the present Government to do everything that lies in its power to knit Ireland to Great Britain in a firm friendship, undivided, strong, and permanent."

Samuel Plimsoll, the Liberal candidate, was a man universally respected for his noble aims and lofty character. He was also an effective speaker, and thoroughly well versed in all political topics. Vincent's style of speaking was, it must be confessed, full-blooded. But he rapidly got into touch with the artisans, who relished his denunciation of the Government's miscalculation abroad and mismanagement at home. In the result he was elected by a majority of 1149—4622 votes against 3484—and thus commenced a relation, lasting for twenty-two years, never sundered or seriously threatened except by death.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CARNARVON INTERVIEW

EARLY in June, 1885, the Gladstone Ministry, weary, distracted, and in some respects discredited, had found relief in defeat on the Budget. Easily enough, if the Whips had been told to exert themselves, they might have kept up a series of sufficient majorities. But, quite apart from the general discord between the Liberal and Radical elements in the Cabinet, there was acute disagreement as to Irish policy. The Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary insisted upon renewal of the expiring Coercion Act. Their demand could not be set aside, but giving effect to it by actual legislation might have brought about, what the party tacticians especially wished to avoid, a hostile coalition of Radicals and Home Rulers. It was, therefore, quietly resolved to be thrown out on the Beer and Spirit Duty. Lord Salisbury had recently pledged himself to take office on the first opportunity. Thus the Conservative party would have to choose between governing Ireland without exceptional legislation and bringing in a Coercion Bill of their own. The dilemma when put to the test was not quite so formidable as its contrivers had expected. In point of fact, the Salisbury Cabinet, with an adverse majority in the Commons, was dependent on

the forbearance of Ministerialists for winding up the agreed business of a specially important session. Had it proposed a Coercion Bill for Ireland it would instantly have been thrown out. This unquestionably was the dominating fact of the situation. It should, however, be confessed that other motives were simultaneously at work. For some time past Lord Randolph Churchill and a group of Tory democrats had entered into somewhat ambiguous relations with the Home Rulers. It was not quite without reason that Nationalist wire-pullers began to count upon Conservative assistance. It is impossible at present to say how far Lord Randolph Churchill went in his irresponsible intrigues—the official biography is, on this point, obviously incomplete—but the probability is that some of his habitually loose utterances were too sanguinely interpreted by the Irish. Certainly they believed that, with a little management, the new Conservative Ministry might be induced to declare for Home Rule—as the one available way of remaining in office. For this idea, so far as Lord Salisbury, Sir Stafford Northcote, and their principal colleague Lord Randolph Churchill excepted, there never was the slightest foundation in fact. Still, it existed, was cherished, and encouraged.

Undoubtedly it was supported by the attitude of the new Lord Lieutenant, Lord Carnarvon. Gentlest, most chivalrous and bravest of men, he wished to dispense with coercion, not because at the time it happened to be impracticable, but because in his mind he was assured that the Irish people would respond to kindness and confidence. He declined any sort of

personal protection, and moved freely about, whether in the streets of the capital or on his tour in remote country places. Moreover, he believed that the politicians could be brought over to accept something short of the Home Rule demanded by Mr. Parnell, and hoped that even the irreconcilable Irish leader might be brought to reason.

At this point it may be appropriate to introduce Vincent's account, so far as he personally was concerned, of a much-canvassed incident :

"One evening at the end of June, 1885, we dined with Lord and Lady Carnarvon in Portman Square. After dinner Lord Carnarvon came and sat by me and asked my opinion upon the state of affairs in Ireland. I said that I had always felt that although any *rapprochement* with the Irish leader was difficult and dangerous, particularly in view of their passive connivance, to say the least of it, with the outrages of the past few years, it was a mistake to keep them entirely at a distance and not endeavour to see if any arrangement could be made with them. Further, that while Home Rule, in the sense of a separate Government, was out of the question, it is indisputable that the Irish had a real grievance in having to bring tramways, waterworks, railways, and other local matters to Westminster for Parliamentary sanction.

"The Viceroy was taken with the idea, and in subsequent interviews asked me to see if a meeting could be arranged between him and Mr. Parnell. I wrote to Mr. Justin McCarthy, whom I knew well as a diner-out and an agreeable man of letters, and after

conversation it was arranged that Mr. McCarthy would come to my house, 1 Grosvenor Square, and there meet Lord Carnarvon.

“That interview took place. I was not present at it, and steps were taken to prevent its being overheard or the servants knowing anything about it. Lord Carnarvon told me afterwards that it had given him great pleasure, and that he had arranged with Mr. McCarthy to meet Mr. Parnell on a subsequent Saturday afternoon, not at Grosvenor Square, but at the house of Lady Chesterfield in Charles, or Hill, Street, Mayfair, which was then empty and had passed into his possession. I urged him on no account to have such an interview without a third person or a shorthand-writer being present. I pointed out that in the contrary case it would be open to Mr. Parnell to put any statements into Lord Carnarvon’s mouth.

“The Viceroy, who was the very soul of chivalry, and incapable himself of any treacherous action even in thought, said he felt bound to show his complete confidence in Mr. Parnell, and in no way to imply even the smallest suspicion or *arrière-pensée*.

“Beyond the fact that the meeting did take place, I had no intimation.

“In the following month—August, 1885—my wife and I went on a tour in Ireland. It was not suggested by Lord Carnarvon and was in no way influenced by His Excellency.

“We dined at the Viceregal Lodge in going and returning. But that was all. I called at the office of the National League in Sackville Street, and received

from Mr. Timothy Harrington, the Secretary, a full account of its organisation. I also called on Mr. Sullivan and Mr. O'Brien to hear from them their views on Irish matters. There was no concealment in the matter. I said I had come solely for my own information as a Parliamentary candidate. I also saw Mr. Dwyer Gray, editor of the *Freeman*, and his wife. I told Lord Carnarvon that I thought it would be a good thing if they were asked to dinner. This was done, but I never heard if they went or not. In the subsequent visit to the west and south and north, I saw everyone capable of throwing light upon the situation—Roman Catholic or Protestant, Unionist or Nationalist, Ecclesiastical or Lay. There was so little agreement between them, so little definite idea that any definite result was impracticable.

“I have nothing materially to object to in the account Mr. Justin McCarthy gives in his *Reminiscences*, published by Chatto and Windus in 1889, vol. II, p. 3, of the Carnarvon-Parnell meeting, nor in Mr. Barry O'Brien's *Life of Mr. Parnell*, save that I was not at the time in question a member of the House of Commons, but only the accepted Conservative candidate for the new constituency of Central Sheffield.

“During the debates in the Home Rule Bill of 1886, Parnell brought up the fact of his interview with Lord Carnarvon ‘through the offices of a prominent member of the Conservative party,’ and I asked Lord Carnarvon for permission to detail the facts. He said that he thought there was no necessity, and that he would take an opportunity of explaining his position in the House of Lords.

"Just before the General Election in June, 1886, some of the Irish Parliamentary party went down to Sheffield and attacked me. I followed in forty-eight hours, and after the explanation nothing more was heard of the matter during the Election, and my majority increased."

For the accuracy of this formal account there is ample evidence in the correspondence which he left behind him and which could, if necessary, be produced.

Vincent, no doubt, had thoroughly enjoyed the part he had taken in bringing about Carnarvon's interview with McCarthy and Parnell. He dearly loved an intrigue of any kind. He had previously tried (June 28) to effect a meeting between Carnarvon and Gray, M.P., the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*. A note in his diary states that he "found it quite impossible for any Irish representative to have communication with the Castle. The tone is evidently getting more determined, and they think that everything is tending in their favour. Could get no practical hint or suggestion, but think I showed, thoroughly though privately, that Carnarvon had no prejudices on the question, and took office with a perfectly free and open mind." No other memorandum left by Vincent—and his diaries are unmutilated—suggests that he had ever before made use of Carnarvon's name, whether with or without justification, while all the subsequent entries show that he practised absolute circumspection.

His tour in Ireland, taken in his wife's company, was



purely a personal enterprise. He wished to post himself in local conditions and make acquaintance with all the leading people. It was in no sense a mission, confidential or otherwise, on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant. This will be seen from a brief summary of his comings and goings. He reached Dublin on August 20, put up at the Shelbourne, and dined with Dwyer Gray. Next day he called on the Government officials, Sir Robert Hamilton, Colonel Bruce, and Mr. Hassel, afterwards on Nationalists such as T. Harrington and Sullivan, editor of the *Nation*. On the 22nd he went to the offices of the National League and was shown its books; then he had another conversation with Sullivan and met William O'Brien. "It was really remarkable," he adds, "my seeing these people in such a friendly way. They were perfectly unanimous that a separate Parliament is the only thing that will satisfy the Irish people, and that if they get this they will be willing to give any reasonable guarantees." On the same day he saw some of the judges. On the 23rd, after attending morning service at St. Patrick's, he lunched with the President of the Land Commission, according to whose account there was a strong case against landlordism in Ireland. Tea with Professor Mahaffy of T.C.O., was followed by dinner at the Castle. Mr. Healy next day unfolded a scheme for raising £100,000,000 in America, buying over the landlords, and creating a peasant proprietary. Leaving the capital, Vincent passed on to Athlone, where he called on the parish priest and county inspector of constabulary; took steamer to the head of Lough Corrib. At Cong he talked about the

Maamtrasna murder, and heard the current story of the convicted person's innocence. After a call on Lord Ardilaun, he visited the scene of the murder, and in the distance saw Captain Boycott's residence. Passing Mitchell Henry's beautiful place, Vincent wondered why he and Lord Ardilaun had spent enormous sums on houses in so isolated and uninviting a neighbourhood. He failed to admire the much-belauded scenery. Having arrived at Galway on the afternoon of the 27th, he conversed with the police and the violent political priest. On reaching Killarney he found a telegram from his supporters in Central Sheffield, asking him to come across for a meeting—a request which could not be refused. At Limerick he talked at the Convent of Mercy with the Roman Catholic Bishop, with the Mayor (one of the most prominent Nationalists in the south). Both men expressed immense confidence in Lord Carnarvon, and expressed repugnance to the idea of Separation, the Bishop also urging the claims of Roman Catholic University education. On returning to Dublin, he dined at the Castle and spoke to the Lord Lieutenant of his observations and inquiries.

On September 7, Vincent had come back to Limerick and visited Lord Kenmare's place. "Though he is personally most popular, the National League has prevented him from getting his rents and turned all against him. Glengarriff and Cork were then visited. Failing to find the Bishop, Vincent went to see the Town Clerk and attended a meeting of the Town Council. At Lismore he was entertained by the agent to the Duke of Devonshire, whose estate



OH! OH!! OH!!! MR. SPEAKER!!

Stern advocates of reticence and self-restraint (in other people). Mr. Swift McNell and Mr. William Rdmnd are electrified with horror at the mere suggestion that anyone should make loud remarks or advocate the shooting of mutineers.

*(Irish papers please copy.)*

*By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch," June 26, 1907*



covered 80,000 acres." "Everything possible is done for the tenants; nevertheless the National League flourishes and gives much trouble." At Youghal he was visited by Captain Plunkett, who with Clifford Lloyd had been active in suppressing the 1881-2 disorder. It is clear that this part of the country is much worse than any other, and it would be most unwise of Lord Carnarvon to visit it. The whole responsibility rests with the Gladstone Government who allowed the National League to attain its present supreme and despotic position." On September 14, a call was made on Dr. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel, the acknowledged leader of the Nationalist movement in the Roman Church. He expressed strong Home Rule views, but deprecated, not less strongly than the Archbishop of Tuam, the idea of Separation. Archbishop Walsh, who was seen next day, was more moderate. Both divines condemned Parnell's recent proposals for an Irish Tariff on English goods and for the establishment of a higher Chamber. From Kerry Vincent went to Belfast, where he came upon a Royal Irish Constabulary man who had served with him at Scotland Yard. The inspector spoke of the prosperity of the city and of Orange fanaticism. Thence to Dublin, where again he had a long conversation with the Lord Lieutenant. On September 21 he returned to England.

The record of these doings—not very different from those of the average English tourist who tried to combine pleasure with instruction by scampering through Ireland and making notes on the way—should be sufficient to show that Vincent's trip was in

no way a political mission, and at the same time he collected observations to be embodied in a private report to Lord Carnarvon, not to make any offer in the Lord Lieutenant's name. He went out to enjoy himself and pick up what information he might that would be useful to him in Parliament. It is not a scientific method of compiling knowledge or building up a policy, but at least it is more practicable and stimulating than mere perusal of newspapers and blue-books. A scrap of intelligence relating to a country one has seen (if only from the windows of an express) or to a people one has mixed with (though but as a casual passer-by) has a more vivid meaning than a detailed account of some unvisited land and unfamiliar nation. A traveller in the full sense of the word, Vincent throughout his public career made a point, as we shall see, of visiting every place that was likely to be the scene of interesting events, and in order to confirm his flying impressions he generally drew up a little essay or unofficial report. Many of us have done that. Vincent's peculiarity was that he would make a fair copy of the document and forthwith transmit it to the personage whom he regarded as most likely to profit by his experience. If he had noted the conditions obtaining in some great European army, he would at once give the benefit of his knowledge to the Minister for War and the Commander-in-Chief. Later on, when things looked threatening in the East, he addressed the result of his personal inquiries to the Prime Minister. On more than one occasion he transmitted his opinions in this way to the Prince of Wales. It was but the natural sequel of

this little tour in Ireland that he should send his private report to the Lord Lieutenant. Although the document reveals nothing not already known about the state of Ireland a quarter of a century ago, it is worth quotation because it illustrates the manner in which its author set to work, the pains he took to get first-hand knowledge, and his success during the pursuit of knowledge in divesting himself of partisan feeling and English prejudices or prepossessions.

That Vincent's journey was recognised at the time by the Nationalists to be one of inquiry may be proved from the terms of a circular instruction given by the Honorary Secretary of the National League (August 22, 1885) to the officers of the local branches.

"Mr. Howard Vincent, who has visited Ireland," so the document runs, "for the purpose of inquiring into the present condition of the people, and ascertaining the opinions of the various classes in the country upon questions of reform, is anxious, amongst others, to consult officers of the local branches of the National League, and I shall be thankful if local secretaries and their officers will afford him any facilities in their power. "T. HARRINGTON."

Equally distinct was Mr. Dwyer Gray's letter to Mr. J. C. McLoughlin (September 16): "Mr. Vincent, who is Conservative candidate for Sheffield, has been in Ireland for some time personally informing himself on the Irish question."

It was not till June of the following year that

Mr. Parnell thought proper to make a charge against Lord Carnarvon and the Conservative party as having deluded him in regard to Home Rule. He was answered in the House of Lords by Lord Carnarvon, and subsequently both men published formal and conflicting accounts of the conditions under which the interview had been held—a proof that Vincent had given sound advice when he protested against Lord Carnarvon going to the meeting without a witness or a shorthand note-writer.

The incident was used by the Irish Nationalists to damage Vincent in Sheffield. At the outset, no doubt, their story had prejudiced him with some of the local Unionists. But his explanation was definite and unassailable. He had not visited Ireland, as the local Radicals asserted, in order to see how far the Tory Government would go in the direction of Home Rule. He had never exchanged one word on the subject with Lord Salisbury, Sir M. Hicks-Beach, and Lord Randolph Churchill. What he had done was to ascertain as best he might the feelings of the Irish people, and it would have been absurd to ignore the views of Parnellite members of Parliament.

In the result, the misrepresentation of the Irish journey did not injure Vincent with his constituents. On the contrary, his majority was slightly increased. But his own private opinion, recorded in an incomplete journal, is that the story did him harm at head-quarters, and prevented him from being offered a post in the Government. Certainly he had been led to hope for a minor appointment, nor were his qualifications inferior to those of some politicians selected or



accepted by Lord Salisbury. On the other hand, Vincent had only sat for a few months in the House of Commons, and with the most carefully constructed Administration the disappointments inflicted always outnumber the gratified ambitions.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FAIR TRADE CHAMPION

AMONGST the notes committed to a confidential diary in which Vincent used to talk to himself about his career, there is an entry that he had horrified judicious friends, his brother Edgar in particular, by taking an active part in public business almost as soon as he had been returned to the House of Commons. It was, however, part of his settled plan. He was determined, when next he went before his constituents (and the date could not be far distant), that he would have something to show them as the work of their representative. Soon after the meeting of Parliament on January 12, and before the Salisbury Administration had been beaten on the Address and resigned office, several entries on the notice paper were standing in his name. For his maiden speech he found the best of openings—a discussion on the failure of the London police in 1886 to check the riot in the West End. He was attentively followed as he enlarged on the duty of the Home Office to interfere as little as possible with the discretion of the Chief Commissioner. Amongst the many other subjects on which he had taken more or less definite action were the introduction of Bills relating to Police Enfranchisement, Instruction of Workhouse

Children, Probation of First Offenders. He had voted in fifty-eight divisions, seventeen times with Lord Hartington, and freely interrogated various members of the new Liberal Government, chiefly on questions of British trade at home and abroad—especially as to the imitation of British Trade Marks by foreign competitors, a point in which Sheffield cutlers were particularly interested. But the Parliamentary feat on which he most prided himself was a motion to increase the capitation grant for Volunteers. He had cleverly secured support from members on both sides of the House, and would have carried the proposal if Mr. Gladstone had not personally intervened and threatened instant resignation. Even so the Government was saved from defeat on a question of confidence only by the vote of twenty-one Parnellites. Vincent, who considered that he had a grievance against the Prime Minister for refusing to recognise his services at Scotland Yard, rejoiced, very naturally, over the flutter he had brought about. Besides, he had got the promise of a financial inquiry which he was sure would result in his demand being conceded.

After the rejection of the Home Rule Bill by the House of Commons and the dissolution of Parliament, Vincent felt himself in a strong position to appeal to Central Sheffield for continuance of its confidence in himself. Though somewhat hampered in his electioneering, as he confesses, by the misrepresentations, to which reference has been made, of his Irish tour, he clearly defined in his election address his position as to Home Rule. "I am no

enemy to Ireland," he declared. "In common with Great Britain she is entitled, in my opinion, as long as peace and order prevail, to wider Local Self-government than is now enjoyed. The pressure of business in the House of Commons must be reduced. The people are now well able to manage their own local affairs, but in Imperial concerns throughout the Empire we must not weaken but strengthen the Union." But already in the "forefront of his programme" (as the phrase now runs) he placed (1) the Revival and Extension of British and Colonial Trade, and (2) the Better Protection of the Work of British Workmen. All the other articles of the orthodox Conservative faith were duly endorsed, but, apart from the immediate issue of Home Rule, his leading card at Sheffield was Fiscal Reform, both on its National and its Imperial side. It will be shown presently how, in company with a small group of equally convinced Protectionists, he planned out a campaign which by the official Conservatives was studiously ignored, and by the great body of the rank and file treated, if not as a dangerous heresy, at least as a forlorn hope. But whatever view might be held as to Fair Trade being adopted by the party as a whole, it is certain that Vincent made no mistake in agitating for it, in season and out of season, amongst the manufacturers and artisans of Sheffield. That was the one topic on which they wished to be addressed, nor did Vincent weary in giving them what they wanted.

One of the reasons why he quickly built up a popularity which every year became more solid was

that he studied the spectacular side of politics. He spared no pains to bring distinguished persons amongst his constituents. At this election, which, even in Sheffield, turned in some degree on the Irish question, he brought on his platform Dr. Kane, the renowned Orange leader, and Mr. Balfour, fresh from a great Belfast meeting of Protestants and Loyalists. There was some attempt to shout him down, but Vincent demanded and obtained a hearing for "the William Pitt of our generation." Cabinet Ministers were familiar figures in Sheffield under the auspices of the member for the Central Division. Best of all he loved encounters in which he was himself protagonist. On the question of Free Trade this amateur in economics (for at present he was little more) would fearlessly tackle so well-equipped an adversary as Mundella, the senior member for Sheffield, and, it should be added, gave a good account of him. For though Vincent never quite gained the ear of the House of Commons (as he would frankly admit) he was excellent on a platform, either for a set speech or against a running fire of interrogations and interruptions.

[One of the reasons why he never seemed to be entirely acceptable to the House of Commons was the fact that he was so completely carried away by a sort of excited enthusiasm whenever one of his special subjects was being debated that he continually interrupted with loud exclamations. His "Hear, hear" has been described as raucous, and not unlike the note of the corncrake. On the other hand, there is in existence a portion of a letter from the late

Mr. W. Stead, containing the following words: "Shall I tell you what impressed me most about your speech? It was your voice, of which I think you have good reason to be, if not proud, grateful to the Giver of all good gifts. It really sounded quite the best of all those raised that evening."

Although he never attained to much position or influence in the House, yet he was personally popular with all—especially, perhaps, with his opponents. He used to say that he knew and liked quite as many of those on the opposite side of the House as on his own.]

Nor did he disdain the minor acts of courtesy and personal attention. When a Sheffield man wished to get a seat in the House of Commons, Vincent, no matter how busy he might be, would see that the desire was gratified, nor did he stay to ask what might be the visitor's politics. A "Liberal Worker" wrote in disgust to a local newspaper that his applications to two Liberal members had been ignored, though afterwards he recognised them in the House, but that he was promptly escorted to the Speaker's Gallery by the Conservative member for the Central Division. In his annual address he always assumed the airs of a Sheffield man, not that of a great gentleman from London who condescended to sit for the place in Parliament. If he took an interesting trip abroad he wrote accounts of it for the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*. He supplied that very enterprising newspaper with the latest parliamentary gossip and political rumours, and in return (need it be said) his name was kept well before its readers. If he had written out,

originally for his own information, a number of notes on the trade of some foreign country, he would put them together in a report and present it to the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce. He was constant in attendance at the Cutlers' banquets, and always ready to give a lecture on some topic of the day. All these functions he performed not as one discharging a tiresome duty, but with the perfectly genuine zest of a man rejoicing to meet old friends and form new acquaintances. In all this social work he was heartily assisted by his wife, who felt and showed an equal pleasure in converting political associations into personal intimacy. These labours of love (be it added) were performed without regard to the date of the next election. Constituents are justly suspicious of attentions resumed or redoubled only when dissolution is in the air. Vincent made it just as much his business to retain as at the outset it had been to win the regard of his constituency. In the interests of his constituents there was no matter too petty for Vincent, no task too great. In the spring of 1891 influenza was specially rife in Sheffield. He promptly put down a question in Parliament as to whether the infection might not be traced to foreign immigrants. Again, he was tireless in agitating with the three railway companies that connect London with Sheffield for a better and cheaper service of trains. Year after year he returned to the charge. The result was that his seat was never shaken by the ups and downs of party fortune. With Unionist seats falling all about him, he could afford to visit other constituencies and give help to friends in danger. Yet he spent little money

in the place ; Central Sheffield was to him one of the cheapest of seats. Except at the beginning he was never heard complaining of Unionist organisation or denouncing the Radicals for sinister and successful cunning. All the help he wanted was readily forthcoming. He never had trouble with his Association, nor was he ever called to account by disinterested supporters if he chose, and often he did choose, to vote against his party. If he had ever cared to kick up his heels and defy his leaders it would not have gone well in Sheffield with an official candidate sent down from head-quarters. The qualities displayed by Vincent in his connection with Central Sheffield may not represent the highest attainments in the art of politics, but if they were studied at the present time by more of the Unionist candidates its position in the country would be considerably fortified. Even in the annual addresses in which Vincent would survey the year's work in Parliament, and especially the part taken by himself, he dwelt largely on local questions. He only missed one annual meeting (through illness) in twenty years, thus fulfilling a promise given after his first election that he would give an annual account of his stewardship to his electors. His Fair Trade argument was nearly always pointed by reference to one of the staple industries of the place. His audience, therefore, realised—what in fact was the truth—that they had before them not merely a member of Parliament, but a personal friend and almost a fellow townsman. Before he went out to South Africa during the war he took the trouble to ascertain the names and regiments of Sheffielders who were at the front ; he







*Photo: Elliott & Fry*

SIR HOWARD VINCENT

inquired after those who were wounded or ailing and sent news to their friends at home. Enemies, no doubt, suggested that all this was done with an electioneering purpose. But his own people knew better. It proceeded from his natural kindness of heart, his unquenchable energy, and a little, perhaps, from his liking to play *deus ex machina* to all and sundry. He was one of those happily constituted men who take unmeasured delight in the people and things about them. His diaries abound with jubilation over the successive advancements of his brothers—there never was such a family as the Vincents. Westminster, as he looked back upon it, was the grandest of old schools, and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers one of the most distinguished regiments in the Service. Never was such a body of Volunteers as the Queen's Westminsters. Even for the sordid and sin-stained walls of Scotland Yard he conceived a sentimental affection. In all England there was not such a constituency as Central Sheffield, so full of good politicians, good citizens, and good fellows.

Persistent as Vincent was in pressing for direct fiscal action in support of British trade, he did not, like some of the later Tariff Reformers, disdain other expedients. He was constantly interrogating and stimulating the Government of the day, whether Liberal or Conservative, in regard to the supineness of our diplomatic and consular representatives abroad. It was a Foreign Office tradition to ignore the commercial interests of British subjects, and, though by this cold official reserve our Government had been kept clear of concession-hunting scandals, the point of

honour was sometimes carried to pedantry. Vincent was for ever asking that the consular reports should be prompt, frequent, and up-to-date, but it cannot be said that his efforts in Parliament bore any fruit beyond vague renewals of non-committal assurances. The truth, which the Foreign Office did not care to confess, was that our representatives abroad, otherwise unexceptionable men for their posts, were neither selected for business capacity nor remunerated on terms that would induce them to act as agents in advance for British enterprise.

Again, there was nobody in Parliament more alive to the disadvantages under which many young Englishmen laboured owing to the difficulty of obtaining a sound commercial training. In 1887 he was anxious that the Imperial Institute should be associated with High Schools of Commerce, and pressed the idea, through Sir Francis Knollys, on the Prince of Wales, and described at length the system which he had seen in operation at various Continental centres. He was much disappointed to learn that the Prince did not see his way to run this proposal simultaneously with the foundation of the Institute. Again he agitated—perhaps with an eye on Firth College, Sheffield—for adequate State assistance to local universities which adopted a modern and practical curriculum. For mere learning and research it cannot be claimed on Vincent's behalf that he displayed any remarkable zeal, but he warmly appreciated those studies which have a practical bearing either upon individual careers or national prosperity. He wrote to *The Times* in support of an English University of Commerce :

“ I find that not only is it almost impossible for British firms to obtain competent British commercial representatives and correspondents knowing foreign languages and foreign countries, but that in what should be a centre of commercial training, namely, the Cowper Street School of the City of London Middle Class Schools Corporation, the study of German is non-existent, and that French is but imperfectly taught. What wonder, then, for instance, a great English bank in the East should have no British employés, and that a vice-chairman of the London Chamber of Commerce should write to me of a lad, the son of an hotel keeper, coming to him for mercantile employment and yet ignorant of the existence of such a town as Sheffield, not knowing the name of a single place in Australia, and having no knowledge of the railway system ? ”

Strenuous as Vincent had been from his first entry into Parliament on the question of protection for British manufactures he had hitherto been somewhat circumspect—more than was his wont—in regard to the claims of landlords and farmers. At the beginning of 1890, however, he attended a meeting held at Oxford (January 19) by the Association for the Preservation of Agriculture. He then moved an argumentative resolution calling upon the Board of Agriculture to take steps for dealing with the progressive decline in arable cultivation, the scarcity and low wages of rural employment, the reduction of live stock, and the dependence of the country upon foreign food supplies. At this time (so far as the available records go)

Vincent had not committed himself to any definite plan for dealing with the agricultural problem, though he appeared on the same platform with politicians who argued that British growers were unfairly handicapped by the rates and other burdens placed on land.

One of the first subjects which Vincent took up in Parliament was more or less adopted from the distinguished Liberal politician whom he had defeated in Central Sheffield. Mr. Samuel Plimsoll's self-appointed mission was to diminish the unnecessary perils of the sailor in the merchant navy. As soon as Vincent got into Parliament he began to agitate on this question. In September, 1885, he had a letter in the *Times* on the insufficient supply of life-belts on the ordinary steamer and the failure to hold regular drills in boat-launching. Two years later he was serving on a Committee dealing with this question. Eventually, in 1890, Government regulations were enacted which carried out Mr. Plimsoll's purposes. Incidentally, Vincent was rewarded for assisting in his adversary's special undertaking, for at the general election of 1895 he received from Mr. Plimsoll a cordial message wishing him success.

Reference has been made in a previous chapter to Vincent's study, during his flying visit to America, of the Massachusetts system of dealing with first offences not of the graver type. Then and there, it would seem, he resolved to introduce it at home. As soon as he entered Parliament he set to work on it. In 1880 he had got his Probationers Bill through the House of Commons, and in May was circularising the Press in view of the second reading. In the

Upper House, however, it was opposed by such authorities as the Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury, and Lord Ashbourne, on the ground that the suggested machinery would not work. It was, therefore, withdrawn for the necessary amendment. Next year we find Vincent worrying the Government about their slackness in the matter, and as a reward of his importunity the Protection of First Offenders Bill was successfully carried through both Houses. Briefly the effect was that persons convicted of an offence punishable with not more than two years' imprisonment might be released on probation—regard being had to the youth, character, and antecedents of the offender, the trivial nature of the act, or any extenuating circumstances. If, however, the offender failed to observe the conditions of his recognisance, he might be apprehended and brought up for judgment.

This seems to us in 1910 a modest measure of Criminal Law Reform, and has recently (1907) been considerably extended, while yet bolder innovations have been suggested by responsible Ministers. But in 1887 it represented the inauguration of a new principle. The English Act, suggested by the Massachusetts Experiment of 1878, had been anticipated in 1886 by the legislatures of Queensland and New Zealand—partly at Vincent's suggestion. The results of this legislation, both immediate and permanent, have proved a pleasant surprise to its authors, though they varied a good deal, in different localities, according to the manner in which it had been applied. Reading a paper in 1891 before an

association dealing with Certified Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Vincent stated at Birmingham :

“The application of the Probation of First Offenders Act, successful though I claim it on the whole to have been, has, however, been most eccentric. We find that in Manchester it has been applied in 233 cases, with a relapse in 18 only; in Oldham, in 191 cases, with a relapse in 19; in Leeds, in 103, with a relapse in 17; in Bradford, in 77, with no relapses. But in Liverpool the three years have only seen it applied in 26 cases, and, most strange of all, in this great city of Birmingham, justly claiming to be in many respects a pioneer of social progress, the Act has only been applied in 5 cases.

“In the Metropolitan Police District it is true that the reason for the extraordinary difference between the Police Courts at Southwark and West London, with the Act applied in 348 cases, with only one relapse and 15 convictions for fresh offences, and the Police Courts at Clerkenwell and Marylebone serving analogous districts, but *not once* utilising the Act, is accounted for by the statement that the procedure under section 16 of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, or the practice of long adjournments without proceeding to conviction, is preferred. In the one case, however, we have certain evidence that the Probation of First Offenders Act works most beneficially, corroborated too by many in daily philanthropic contact with discharged prisoners, like Mr. Wheatley, of the excellent St. Giles' Mission, which does not exist in



the other. I hope then that these facts may receive consideration at the hands of the learned magistracy in this city and such districts as have hitherto ignored the Act."

Later on it will be necessary to speak of Vincent's attitude towards more recent theories of criminal responsibility and the treatment of habitual offenders.

In spite of vague hints that offence would be given in the most august quarters, Vincent persisted, year after year, in pressing the First Commissioner of Works to obtain concessions for the public in the use of St. James's Park. In the autumn of 1889 it was at last announced that Constitution Hill would be thrown open. On Mr. Gladstone's 1886 Administration he had made no impression, but when the Conservatives came in Mr. Plunket (Lord Rathmore) at once obtained from the Duke of Cambridge, as Ranger, the opening of Storey's Gate road. The opening of Constitution Hill, declared Vincent, marked the beginning of a new era, and he trusted that the owner of the 250 remaining gates, barriers, and bars in London would forthwith follow their Sovereign's example.

During the "Randolph Churchill crisis," as it was called, Vincent, though strictly affiliated to the Conservative party, warmly supported Lord Salisbury's offer to serve either with or under Lord Hartington. He dismissed as groundless the rumour that Conservatives were but lukewarm in their overtures to the Liberal-Unionist leader. "Half of us," he wrote, "owe, if not our seats, at least our majorities, to

Unionist support." He rejoiced in the appointment of Mr. Goschen, and would have liked places in the Government to be found for other distinguished Liberals. At the same time he frankly deplored Lord Randolph Churchill's secession. Here, perhaps, it may be mentioned that nobody had more reason to be surprised at the news of his resignation, since on the very day when it was announced he received a letter, as though written in the ordinary course of business, from the then Leader of the House of Commons.

It did not endear Vincent to the official Conservatives that he found fault with the Anglo-German Convention (1890) as to East Africa. The point he criticised was the cession of Heligoland, and he was reported, in an Anglo-American newspaper, to have said that Lord Salisbury had exchanged a beautiful island for a forest full of pigmies. For this unbecoming language he was lectured by H. M. Stanley, who considered everything secondary to the preservation of his beloved Uganda. In point of fact the offending phrase had been invented by the American journalist. Vincent's objection to the transfer of Heligoland, as he explained in *The Times*, was that the island "might be of priceless value to a British fleet blockading the mouth of the Elbe" or "fortified by a foreign Power would keep a hostile fleet away from Hamburg." Vincent, it should be added, in foreign politics was the very reverse of an alarmist, but "Germany," he added, "looks ahead. We do not always do so." And he would not be a party to "hauling down the British flag upon any portion of the globe unless personally

convinced that the Empire gains more than it loses." It is generally agreed, even by those who most cordially approve Lord Salisbury's general policy in the partition of Africa, that a grave strategical error was committed in giving up a position important to the command of the North Sea.

At the beginning of 1891, when the time for another appeal to the people had come into sight, Vincent, always an electioneerer, began to press forward a scheme of Old Age and Invalidity Pensions. His plan, so far as he had thought it out, was for the State to operate through the great Friendly Societies. This, he hoped, would encourage a more general provision against old age, the ordinary benefit funds being more or less confined to sickness. Quickly he found himself in hot water. It was obvious that Government help would only be given to those societies which would stand a rigid actuarial test. The rest were up in arms against a scheme that would either leave them in the cold, or expose them to an invidious and perhaps too exacting inquiry. He was not the man to shrink from a controversy. Himself a member of some of the local societies, he attended a meeting at one of the lodges and argued his case at some length. There was no wish, he said, to undermine the independence of thrift associations. Indeed, his object was to preserve them from extinction by averting, what he disliked, a convenient system of compulsory insurance. He seems, however, to have underrated the unwillingness even of solvent and well-managed concerns to submit their accounts to an official audit—even for the sake of

getting State aid. Certainly he made no progress with the movement.

It would have been strange if the ex-Director of Criminal Investigations had not been amongst the keenest advocates of control over immigration. While he was at Scotland Yard a great part of his time had been occupied in watching for the arrival and observing the movements of anarchists and other political conspirators. In spite of the English tradition in favour of affording asylum to *bona fide* refugees from persecution, it was essential, if only as a matter of public courtesy, that our Government should not expose itself to the suspicion of harbouring the authors of murder plots. The preventive work of the London police would obviously be rendered easier if the Home Secretary were empowered, at his discretion, to turn away persons reasonably suspected of criminal purposes. Moreover, as a thoroughgoing Protectionist, quite as eager to keep up wages as to maintain prices, Vincent wished to exclude the horde of destitute aliens driven to our shores from eastern and south-eastern Europe. In Leeds and other Yorkshire industrial towns he had seen the sweating system at work, and believed that it could most effectively be checked by cutting off the supply of Russian, Polish, and Hungarian Jews. The mischief was by no means only metropolitan. In 1889, Vincent wrote to a correspondent, there had been in one quarter of Leeds 621 houses occupied by these "greeners," but in June, 1892, the number had risen to 900, and there was reason, he believed, to fear that the rate of immigration would shortly be accelerated.

His curious faculty for working up ideas that would in due course, whether sooner or later, be carried into effect, was shown in his support of Sir George Baden-Powell's proposal during the first Jubilee year, that the Royal Style and Titles should be altered so as to include mention of the colonies. The suggestion was not, indeed, original. It had been brought up in the debates (1876) on the grant of the title Empress of India. Mr. Forster then regretted that the colonies had been left out. Mr. Lowe had intimated that they would resent the preference given to India. Much the same ground was taken by Mr. Gladstone.

Owing to evidence which Vincent had given in 1881 before a Parliamentary Committee as to immoral traffic in young girls, he was challenged four years later by Mr. W. T. Stead, who had embarked on a crusade to carry the Bill based on that Committee's report. The whole of the facts, as Vincent explained in the House of Commons, which the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* had dressed up in sensational colours, were taken from his own testimony as recorded in a Blue Book. On the prosecution of Mr. Stead and others for conspiring to abduct a certain Eliza Armstrong (by way of showing how easily the crime might be committed) Vincent was called as a witness for the defence. From his examination it appeared that he had warned the defendant as to the illegality of the course proposed, and told him that he would probably see him next in the dock. Vincent regretted, he said, that Mr. Stead's enthusiasm had led him needlessly to break the law,

as without that object lesson Lord Salisbury's Government was resolved upon passing the measure.

As if he could not find enough work in Parliament, in the autumn of 1888 Vincent allowed himself to be elected by his parish (St. George's, Hanover Square) to the moribund Board of Works, and afterwards, in December, to its successor, the London County Council. He had declined to stand upon a platform, but came forward simply as one interested and experienced (he had served four years in the Vestry) in local administration. Proposed by the Moderates for the vice-chair, he withdrew in favour of Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury). Though he adhered so long as possible to this non-partisan attitude, he strongly opposed the Progressive demand for control over the Metropolitan Police, chiefly on the ground that it would be necessary, for the protection of national buildings, to maintain simultaneously a State Constabulary. As Chairman of the Fire Brigade Committee he did much useful work: with characteristic thoroughness he spent one of his brief vacations in going over to Paris and studying French methods. But it was in connection with the Fire Brigade and his beloved Queen's Westminsters that he suffered a certain humiliation in his double capacity of Chairman and Colonel. At a review held (May, 1889) by the Prince of Wales of the Fire Brigade, the spectators broke through the line of the Queen's Westminsters, and the Royal carriages for a few minutes were with unceremonious loyalty surrounded and hustled. The incident was exaggerated in newspapers hostile to the London County Council. It appeared that Vincent

had relied on the police to clear the route, but on this point there was some misunderstanding. At the debate in Spring Gardens, though he was thrown over by some of his colleagues, a formal vote of censure was averted. His explanation in assuming responsibility for the misfortune was held to make up for any fault of judgment. "Your husband," wrote Sir Eyre Massey Shaw to Mrs. Vincent, "made a very clear and manly statement that showed him to be a gentleman to the tips of his fingers. The Prince and Princess wrote, through Sir D. Probyn, that they had forgotten all about the incident. They did not wish to fix blame on anyone. Nor was any ill-blood made between the London County Council and either the Home Office or the Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, owing to the extreme tact with which Vincent dealt with a difficult situation.

## CHAPTER XII

### IMPERIAL PREFERENCE AND PROTECTION

AFTER quite a brief experience of parliamentary conditions in the eighties Vincent realised that any advance in the Fair Trade movement must be worked outside the House of Commons. Under a Conservative Administration progress was even more difficult than when the Liberals were in power. When Mr. Gladstone or one of his Ministers was heckled by the Member for Central Sheffield because a Government order for swords or lead pencils had gone abroad the Opposition Tories cheered with a good heart. They were righteously indignant when a Radical statesman was forced to confess that nothing would be done during the visit of so many distinguished colonists to London on account of the Colonial Exhibition to promote trade within the Empire. It was altogether a different story when such interrogations were addressed to members of a Tory Cabinet. Privately, Vincent was exhorted not to embarrass the Government—sometimes by politicians not less eager than himself to revive Protection upon a moderate scale. In public he was politely snubbed. A politician aiming merely at his own advancement would have been less persistent in advocating a cause which it was impossible for his chiefs to adopt. The Conservatives



held office on Liberal-Unionist sufferance, and in the eighties the Liberal-Unionists were nervously anxious. It is not too much to say that during the early years of the compact the slightest symptoms of official hankering after Protection might have broken up what certainly had not then become an alliance of hearts. Mr. Chaplin was, indeed, a member of the Cabinet, but, though he was not expected to recant his economic opinions, it was understood that he should not propagate them in his Ministerial capacity. At that time, so far as Fair Trade or Imperial Preference was a practical question at all, the only supporters were to be found amongst old-fashioned Conservatives, while by Liberal-Unionists it was unanimously repudiated.

In the Conservative Press, however, Vincent's ideas, especially in regard to Imperial trade, found more acceptance than in either House of Parliament. In December, 1886, he had asked the President of the Board of Trade for statistics, in a concise and tabular form, as to "the value and general character of the interchange of commerce between the sixty-five dominions of the British people." The dry official reply was that more information was contained in the Board's annual statistics. Strictly this was true, but to the ordinary person the mass of figures was unmeaning. With the assistance of Mr. Stephen Bourne, therefore, Vincent undertook to do what the Board had refused. His object was, he explained, to apply a commercial test to the maintenance of Imperial integrity and to the advantages, present and future, of securing permanent unity by means of Federation. The digested statistics, alphabetically

arranged, were set out in a circular, and the work favourably noticed, not merely in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, but in London journals like the *Globe* and the *St. James's Gazette*, whose editors knew that, outside the small Parliamentary circle, many would be pleased and none offended by an independent attitude on fiscal policy. Moreover, the idea of Imperial Federation was generally welcomed, and many persons, not otherwise discontented with the Free Trade system, were growing impatient of the hard-and-fast restrictions that seemed likely to defeat the movement for a great British Union. On the questions of representation and common defence, agreement twenty years ago might have been easier, or at least simpler, than it is at present. But already the tariff difficulty seemed to block the way, and many Conservatives, with just a few Liberals, had begun to ask themselves whether it was still necessary to persist in absolute fiscal neutrality as between foreigners and fellow subjects.

Vincent, who in January, 1887, had read a paper before the Imperial Federation League, was eager in his personal welcome to the delegates at the Colonial Conference. During his travels in 1884 he had made acquaintance with most of them. He entertained them frequently and brought them into informal association with individual members of the Cabinet. In the House of Commons he began to agitate, chiefly by means of questions and motions, for denunciation of the treaties with Germany and Belgium which precluded differential treatment of British colonies. When the duty on bottled wine



A STUDY IN ECSTASY

"Protection! Oh, the joyful sound!"

(N.B.—This is Sir Howard Vincent—*not* Mr. Swift MacNeill.)

*By kind permission of the Editor of the "Westminster Gazette"*



was raised in Mr. Goschen's Budget he urged that Australian products should be exempted. Against renewal of the heavy tea duty he protested on the ground that the money might more fairly be derived from articles competing with British trade. In point of magnitude these proposals were inconsiderable, but, like some of the later advocates of Tariff Reform, his chief care was to get the principle admitted. For its development he was ready to trust to experience of its benefits.

At the meeting of the National Union in December, 1888, held at Wolverhampton, he put down a resolution in favour of stimulating, "by all possible means," the commercial intercourse of the Empire and calling for reversal of the policy embodied in the treaties of 1862 and 1865. He quoted in his favour Lord Rosebery's recent declaration at Leeds that the existing "loose and indefinable relations" between mother country and colonies would lead eventually to separation. Vincent's motion was rejected, partly because some of his supporters were accidentally absent, partly because the delegates as a body did not wish to raise a difficult topic for the Government.

Undaunted by this reverse, Vincent, who was secretly encouraged by some important persons who officially thought it advisable to frown upon his fiscal indiscretions, went on vigorously with his agitation. At the beginning of 1891 he had made such progress as justified him, so he thought, in taking a new start. A network of associations had been spread over the United Kingdom, and much local energy was being

displayed. On February 13 he got together at his house in Grosvenor Square a semi-private conference of members of Parliament interested in the extension of colonial trade and promotion of Imperial unity. It was proposed by Mr. James Lowther and seconded by Sir Edward Harland, that a strong committee should be formed for work both in Parliament and throughout the country. Some encouragement had been derived from the Prime Minister's judiciously veiled hint that a change of public opinion would enable him to ventilate the whole question of a fiscal discrimination in favour of the colonies. At the meeting it was stated that in the House of Commons a considerable number of Free Traders were well inclined towards Lord Salisbury's view. However that may have been, it is certain that nineteen or twenty years ago the bearings of Imperial Preference were on both sides far more calmly discussed than after Mr. Chamberlain had launched his full policy of Tariff Reform.

In the Upper House the question was raised without causing any great flutter by Lord Dunraven, and in the House of Commons, where it was pressed by Lowther and Vincent, a decidedly sympathetic reply was drawn from Mr. Goschen as Chancellor of the Exchequer, though he was, of course, aware that no basis for an effective preference would be found except through the taxation of articles of universal consumption. But Ministers were still a long way from giving more than a polite attention to Vincent's recurrent inquiry about the treaties with Belgium and Germany.

It was in this year (1891) that Vincent and his friends formed the United Empire Trade League. In the first list of members it is interesting to find the names of several active politicians who have either gone over altogether to the other side or were noticeably late in accepting the fiscal policy of the Unionist party. Amongst the earliest and staunchest supporters of the cause may be quoted: Colonel Bridgeman, Colonel A. M. Brookfield, Admiral Field, Mr. Morton Frewen, Mr. Henniker Heaton, Sir H. Howarth, Sir W. Leng, Sir Cunliffe Lister, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Roper Lethbridge, Sir J. W. Maclure, D. MacIver, Sir F. Milner, Colonel McCalmont, Major Rasch, Sir H. Seton Karr, and Sir Frederick Young. The Vice-Presidents were Sir Alexander Galt (Canada), Sir Gordon Sprigg (South Africa), and Sir Julius Vogel (New Zealand).

The objects of the League were to remove all hindrances to the preferential encouragement of trade between all parts of the British Empire, and to form a Voluntary Customs Union; to remove or reduce Foreign Customs duties or other burdens imposed to the prejudice of British trade and labour, whether Imperial or colonial; to advance the interests of British trade and labour throughout the world, and to disseminate information as to its extension amongst members of the League. Subscriptions ranged, according to the form of membership selected, from a guinea to a shilling. A good send-off was secured in a hearty promise of co-operation from Sir John MacDonald of Canada. In June, 1892, a great Conference was organised. It was attended by many

well-known men of affairs, British and colonial. Sir Charles Tupper proposed a general resolution :

“That this Convention impresses upon the Empire the unlimited productive resources of the world-wide realms under the British flag, and their full ability, on the expiration of adequate notice for development, to supply the needs of the Mother Country and other portions of the Empire in every substance required by any British subject independently of foreign nations. It urges the concentration of all patriotic efforts in Britain and Greater Britain upon pressing this home on the minds of the people, with a view to the extension of inter-British trade, the territorial security of Her Majesty's possessions, and the personal advantage of each individual.”

A vigorous campaign was started by the League in the chief political centres of the United Kingdom.

It is because Vincent had become a preferentialist before he declared for Fair Trade that precedence had been given to his agitation in favour of an Imperial Union of Commerce. Before he had returned from his voyage round the world he had definitely pinned his faith to the cause represented by the Empire Trade League. But it was not (so far as we can tell) until he had personally examined the conditions of Sheffield and other manufacturing cities hampered by fiscal burdens in their competition with foreigners that he took up the demand for systematic reprisals against economic adversaries. His first love was, perhaps, the warmer, but it ran, for the first few years at least, a comparatively calm and unobstructed



course, whereas his attachment to Fair Trade was, from its very beginning, stimulated by the interest of unabated controversy. Central Sheffield was, as he found it, strongly Protectionist, but the opposition was by no means feeble. In the city as a whole, as the vicissitudes of its representation show, the Radical and Free Trade party was always well able to keep its end up. Vincent's incessant questions to Ministers and occasional speeches in Parliament, together with his activity in the National Union, had marked him out as a leader of the revived movement. He always reposed a deep, perhaps excessive, faith in organisation, and it was not long before he was unanimously elected (November, 1887) President of the Workmen's Association for Defence of British Industry—founded and largely managed by the late H. J. Pettifer. He had delivered at a conference in London one of his rousing, full-blooded speeches, making a special appeal to the wage-earning classes, and helped, with a few friends, to provide funds for a regular campaign. In a letter addressed to the journal *Fair Trade*, he explained that the basis of the Association was non-political.

It was inevitable before long that Vincent should be brought into conflict with the most eloquent of Free Trade champions. Vincent's success in prevailing upon the National Union at Oxford to pronounce in favour of Fair Trade had brought about some misgivings to responsible leaders of the Conservative party. But at that time the National Union was (as Vincent frankly confesses in his journal) "no better than a farce." It served chiefly as an oppor-

tunity for the more ardent young men to blow off steam, and the leaders, wisely enough, refrained from sitting on the safety valve. But it was not to be expected that he, staunch Unionist though he might be, would take with equal unconcern this Protectionist demonstration. In a letter to a correspondent he trounced the Fair Trade heretics. Here are two characteristic specimens of his high-toned vituperation :

“ I should like to see a carefully-drawn tariff of the Fair Traders, Protectionists, and Monopolists who are now asking for public support. It would be an amusing exhibition of ignorance and folly and confusion ; it would show the impossibility of going back to the system which Sir Robert Peel attacked in the year 1842, and which he utterly demolished in the year 1846. Since that time there is abundant evidence of the improved conditions of the millions who work for their daily bread. Wages are generally higher ; in many employments they are nearly, or quite, double, and the cost of almost everything the millions buy and consume is greatly reduced, and their general condition is comfortable beyond anything that has been known in the country during the last one hundred years.”

“ You have observed what the Conservatives have been saying at Oxford. They return, shall I say, like a dog to his vomit. They very slowly accept new teachings and new opinions, and the old delusions still attach to them ; but they are all confusion and know not what they ask.”

Never lacking in intellectual audacity, and undeterred by personal friendship, Vincent joined issue with the old man eloquent, and sympathised with him in "having to admit the comparative failure of the greatest work of a great life." For the deplorable results of Free Trade the veteran soldier was referred to the evidences of distress and destitution afforded by almost every street or village through which he might pass. The recent words of Mr. Goschen at Manchester and Lord Salisbury at Oxford were cited in triumph, before Vincent went in for writing for Sheffield and as President of the Working Men's Association for the Defence of British Industry, to argue that the vote of the National Union need not embarrass the Government. The delegates had simply given expression to the general sense of that considerable portion of the community with which they were personally acquainted, and by whose suffrages they attended the recent conference.

"If the great mass of the people" (he continued) "see fit to declare that they are willing to go on suffering for the enrichment of the foreigner there is nothing more to be said. But, sir, I know that this view is not shared by hundreds of capable men, and of thousands who have, in the words of the Royal Commission, 'only partial or intermittent work' in this borough of Sheffield and in many parts of the country. With the full approval of the vast majority of my constituents, and by the help of many associations formed for industrial defence, I am taking active steps to ascertain the feeling on this subject of other great centres of population, so far as is possible in

public meetings. They may, I earnestly hope, not be given a party or political character by Radical opposition to the rescue of British industry. Free discussion will in every case be invited.

“At Oxford this has been made clear. If the people wish to defend themselves and their industrial pursuits, there is a national party in the State who will respond to their call, but only to the exact extent of the general desire. This may possibly include the taxation of most foreign produced goods by production of which the men of Great Britain and Ireland have a natural right to maintain themselves and their families. But it need not necessarily extend, unless a distinct wish is expressed to that effect, to the foreign made big loaf, which jocular politicians are prone to place at the top of a sign-post pointing to the workhouse. Its compounds form less than one-third of the foreign competition with the agricultural population. But, whatever decision of detail be arrived at, relief of taxation and the freeing of the tea and coffee-pot of the wife and the mother, the freeing of the plum-pudding of the children, and the tobacco pipe of the poor man, which false free trade taxes, although no combination of possessions can supply them from the United Kingdom, will be a certain result of that fiscal reform the demand for which is rapidly becoming louder and stronger.”

The reserve as to food taxation should be noted, and with it the reference to the political jocularities about the big loaf—so closely parallel are the courses run by the fiscal controversy in 1889-92 and in 1903-10. To multiply instances would be inexcus-



"I WEEP FOR YOU," THE WALRUS SAID  
(SIR HOWARD VINCENT)

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ably tedious, but a quite general survey would show how little of novelty there is under the sun of politics.

Vincent was lectured for his importunity by some of the men closely associated with the Fair Trade movement ; Lord Salisbury himself was less squeamish. He declined, indeed, to commit himself to Fair Trade proposals until they had taken concrete shape as a Bill presented to Parliament. He had listened, he said, to Fair Traders' arguments. Upon many points they were agreed : upon many precise. But on those as to which they were agreed they were not precise, while on those as to which they were precise they were not agreed. Nevertheless, he distinguished carefully between Fair Trade as advocated by his honourable friend, Mr. Vincent, and Protection as commonly understood.

In a speech (December, 1887) Lord Salisbury at once avoided a breach with the Fair Trade group (nearly one hundred strong in the House of Commons) and reassured the Liberal Unionists as to the continuity of the existing fiscal system. Vincent and his friends were left quite free, without incurring the charge of disloyalty towards their party leaders, to preach their favourite doctrines. In a letter to the short-lived *Tory Democratic Gazette* of January, 1888, Vincent confessed that no change of policy was probable until the nation had aroused itself to a sense of the foreign yoke which the last forty years had woven round the neck of British industry. It was not a rich man's question, or one that concerned the easy classes. But for the masses of the people it was a vital matter, since if they produced little could consume little. He

worked hard meantime as to the Workmen's League, whose executive committee consisted solely of skilled artisans, the organising Secretary (Pettifer) being an electro-plate worker.

It was a matter of little concern to Vincent whether a newspaper was of large or limited circulation. He was always ready to write a letter or give an interview if he could but advertise Fair Trade. In *Pump Court* (March, 1885), for instance, he explained with some precision his views as to reform of taxation. He would put a duty on all manufactured goods coming from a foreign country with a smaller one on the partially manufactured, raw materials being admitted free. Food he would tax in the case of eggs, poultry, game, and bacon. On the corn question he was explicit :

“I am perfectly aware that the English people would not submit to have their bread taxed. But who wishes to do so? Who proposes such a thing? Not the Fair Trader, most assuredly. What appears to me to be the right thing to do is to admit corn grown in our colonies, which buy most of us, on more advantageous terms than foreign. To give those colonies an advantage by placing a slight duty upon foreign-grown wheat would surely be only just to them and ourselves. Since we cannot grow enough wheat at home for our consumption, by all means let us get it from other places as cheaply as we can. But let it be in its raw state, not ground into flour. We have more than enough means at our disposal to convert the wheat into flour, and the use of those means would



give employment to thousands of our countrymen now out of work. It would not only revive the business of the miller, but also of the machinist, the sack-maker, the carter, the dock-labourer, and scores of other occupations dependent upon this one industry of corn grinding."

Here we have set out what practically was an anticipation of the full Birmingham policy.

Dealing in February, 1889 (at Bath), with the considerable revival of trade, Vincent dwelt on the advantage of living under a strong and stable Government which inspired confidence and respect both at home and abroad. He pointed out, however, that of the increase in the whole volume of trade for the year only £12,000,000 came under exports, while the population had simultaneously increased by 300,000. What he protested against was raising £20,000,000 of revenue on foreign commodities with which there was no home competition and which had become necessities of life. Why not tax foreign articles that might, or will be, produced in the United Kingdom?

At the opening of Parliament in the same month (February, 1889) he introduced his Merchandise Marks Bill which prohibited the importation or sale of manufactured foreign articles unless they were distinctly marked with the name of their country of origin—a matter to which reference will be made in another chapter. For reasons which will appear, the results did not satisfy expectations. A joke at Vincent's expense was much enjoyed by himself. At a committee on this Bill in the House of Commons a watch-

maker was explaining how foreign works were put into English cases. Vincent submitted his own watch for inspection, and it was at once pronounced to be foreign. Mr. Mundella, the hard-mouthed Free Trader, was, however, certified as owner of a genuine English chronometer. Generally, it must be confessed, the Fair Trade movement amongst Parliamentary Conservatives was falling a little out of favour. At the Nottingham Conference of the National Union the delegates gave it the go-by—in deference, no doubt, to influential Liberal Unionist pressure.

A welcome stimulus was, however, administered by the McKinley Tariff Bill in the United States, and Vincent made the most of it, especially in Sheffield, which would be hit more severely than some other places. A great meeting of protest was called, with the Mayor presiding, and the Foreign Office called upon to remonstrate officially at Washington against an “act of commercial warfare,” and to point out that the United States was jeopardising its own free market. Vincent drove the point home amongst his constituents. He quoted an answer received from the Under-Secretary that there was no power to obtain concessions from a foreign Government unless we were imposing duties upon staple products of its subjects. In the case of Greece we had been able to get fair treatment “because, Heaven knows why, we put an import duty on currants. Greece wants her currants to come in cheaper. ‘Very good,’ said Lord Salisbury, ‘reduce your duties on British manufactures.’ Down came the Greek duties, the British

duties on currants are reduced 5s. per hundredweight, and there is reciprocity of exchange. What you should do would be to establish the same state of affairs with the United States, with Germany and France and Spain, 'duties on staple articles of production' to be reduced when their duties on British goods are reduced, to be taken off when their duties are taken off. That will be Free Trade. You have not begun to get it yet. You will only get it by reciprocity or retaliation. 'Retaliation,' writes my American correspondent before-mentioned, 'may possibly make a change in our tariff legislation.' "

Most dauntless of correspondents, Vincent engaged himself this year in a newspaper controversy with the late Sir Thomas (afterwards Lord) Farrer. The distinguished Treasury official wound up his economic argument with a story which has become a favourite in fiscal deputations because it may be used on either side.

"Let me end this letter," wrote Sir Thomas, "with a vivid picture of the present state of feeling in the States, given to me by one of the shrewdest of the many agreeable Americans who have recently honoured us with their presence. He said to me: 'I am a Vermont man, and all my farming neighbours have their lives made costly to them by our system of protection; but,' said he, 'I shall go to my nearest neighbour and say to him, "Sir, I am going to agitate for the overthrow of our Republican institutions and the introduction of despotism," and he will reply, "Agitate if you please, Sir; I have my farm to manage." And then I shall go to him and say, "I am

going to destroy the Christian religion and to introduce atheism and anarchy," and he will say quietly to me, "Destroy it if you will ; that is no business of mine." But then I shall go to him and say, "I am going to advocate a moderate reduction of our enormous protective duties," and he will get up at once and say to me, "Then, Sir, I shall go and get down my rifle."'"

In view of the approaching general election in which the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists must fight shoulder to shoulder, an increasing timidity prevailed in regard to Fair Trade—Lord Salisbury alone persisted in the attitude of free criticism in regard to fiscal policy. At Hastings, May 18, 1892, he dwelt with emphasis on the commercial defencelessness of Great Britain. In an age of treaty-making, how could it hold its own unless it could penalise nations that injured it by refusing access to its markets? Foreign nations were erecting brazen walls of tariff round their shores and trying to kill English trade. Yet we had deliberately stripped ourselves of armour and weapons. The Prime Minister stopped at this point. He did not go the length of recommending Retaliation, but simply explained some of the drawbacks incidental to a rigid system of Free Imports. What he did was to lay before the country a position which, as Foreign Secretary, he was unable to modify for the benefit of British commerce.

The Fair Traders naturally were jubilant, though perhaps they read into Lord Salisbury's words a more definite indication of policy than he had intended to

convey. Their meetings up and down the country were animated with a new enthusiasm, and from Vincent's correspondence with colleagues like Lord Masham and Mr. James Lowther an unaccustomed note of hopefulness appears. A sanguine Australian friend wrote about the "virtual conversion of Lord Salisbury," unaware that the Prime Minister on several previous occasions had spoken in the same sense, but not thought it prudent or possible to act upon his views. The Hastings speech did, however, produce considerable excitement, both at home and abroad. He was severely lectured by *The Times*, while the *Temps* delighted in the political confusion which it anticipated.

The Radical newspapers were full of rumours as to Cabinet dissensions, and the Social Democrats, through Mr. H. M. Hyndman, while repudiating Fair Trade, proclaimed the bankruptcy of Liberalism as proved by the failure of their leading principle to improve the condition of the workers. Vincent came to the front with a pointed inquiry that went to the very root of the Cobdenite cause as stated by judicious supporters. The price of wheat, he pointed out in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, had fallen 25 per cent. Had bread been cheapened in proportion? Vincent was hotly attacked by many correspondents, but an independent writer summed up the position by saying that Vincent's question had not been answered. "He is probably quite wrong, but there must be no mistake. If he be not wrong, then his opponents have no case at all. It is the price of bread to the consumer that really matters, and nothing else does

matter very much. I wish one of your readers would forgo the pleasure of saying smart things about Colonel Vincent, and take the trouble to tabulate the easily obtainable figures which are needed to destroy this heresy."

The protest made in the course of a newspaper controversy Vincent followed up with a magazine article. In the *National Review* for July, 1892, just after the writs had been issued for the general election, he took Lord Salisbury's speech at Hastings as the text of an article entitled "Common-sense at Last." It showed that the Prime Minister's latest utterance was consonant with previous declarations, especially at Newcastle in 1881, and Dumfries in 1884. The fact that during the past six years of office nothing had been done to remedy the admitted evil, Vincent explained by saying that Ireland had blocked the way. Rather than imperil the Union industrial inconvenience had been tolerated. After an analysis of recent Board of Trade statistics, he dealt with the failure of Great Britain to obtain fair treatment for the French Government. But a more striking case had been presented in 1891 by Brazil, which granted to the United States favours that it refused to Great Britain. To Lord Salisbury's remonstrance the reply of the Brazilian Government was in effect that the duties on British imports must be maintained in order to pay interest on British investments. Finally, Vincent dwelt on a Canadian offer of Preference, and argued that our colonial as compared with other foreign trade showed a healthier capacity of expansion.





THE CONVERSION OF ST. MICHAEL.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT	} "Got him at last!"
MR. HENRY CHAPLIN	
MR. JAMES W. LOWTHER	

*By kind permission of the Proprietors of the "Westminster Gazette," June 18, 1902*



In the House of Commons, it should be mentioned, at the beginning of the session, Vincent, following Mr. James Lowther, had once again pressed the Government to remove the treaty obstacles in the way of preferential arrangement with Canada. He had met with a rather stiff refusal by the Conservative President of the Board of Trade. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach (Lord St. Aldwyn) confessed that the arrangements made in 1862 and 1865 were improvident, but the treaties could not now be denounced without surrendering the parts beneficial to ourselves. He would go a long way and do a great deal to establish a real zollverein between England and her colonies. But it would not be the result of such arrangements in our colonies as seemed to be contemplated. It would amount simply to this : that we should impose protective duties on food and raw materials, not for the benefit of our own agricultural interest, but for that of the colonies ; while, on the other hand, the colonies could not reduce their duties on our manufactures to such an extent as to enable English to compete on advantageous terms with colonial manufacturers. The Government was quite willing to embrace any advantageous opportunity which offered to release ourselves from these treaties, but this was not the time to make an effort in that direction.

Vincent and his friends, however, were not in the slightest degree disheartened by the official attitude of the Government, especially as Mr. Goschen (Chancellor of the Exchequer) was known to be in principle sympathetic, and had expressed himself in language

that only just stopped short of encouragement. At a score of meetings throughout the country the colonial question was pressed almost *pari passu* with Protection for Home Industry, and after the general election, from which Mr. Gladstone came back with a majority of 42, Vincent took up the double propaganda with unabated energy and growing confidence—although staunchly supporting the Unionist party and always hoping, sometimes against hope, that the economic factor of an increasing group would eventually find a place in its official programme.

## CHAPTER XIII

### IN OPPOSITION

FOR a Parliamentary free-lance—and on fiscal matters Vincent claimed independence—the happiest time is when his party is in opposition. He may count upon benevolent neutrality, if not active help, from the official leaders. On Mr. Gladstone's return to power with a small and precarious majority, the Member for Central Sheffield used all his considerable ingenuity in framing questions and raising discussions that would at once embarrass the Government, gratify his constituents, and promote his cause. His activity at Westminster was, however, surpassed by his exertions on public platforms. At Oxford in November, 1892, he held forth upon agricultural depression; and again, at St. James's Hall in London, with Mr. Chaplin and Mr. James Lowther, at an Agricultural Conference, denounced the persistent neglect of the leading British industry by successive Governments. Following upon the proceedings of this Conference was, in Vincent's manner, the formation of a new league—an Agricultural Union. Its purpose was defined in a manifesto disclaiming "Platonic efforts to kindle a belief in bimetallism" (a remedy which was at the time in high favour with certain Conservative politicians, Mr. Chaplin amongst

them). The Union further declined to imperil its cause by meddling with the relations between real and personal property in point of taxation. This would arouse political and urban hostility by transferring to other industries and interests the taxation then levied on land. "Nor would the Union alienate the sympathy of local retailers by making radical changes in the distribution of agricultural products." The one proposal which had aroused interest at the Conference in St. James's Hall and was worth being taken up by the Union, was to levy on competing imports a duty not less than the rates and taxes falling on home production. This was declared with robust tautology to be "the cardinal, the sole, the paramount aim, regardless of the petty claims of party or the personality of wavering politicians." At Sheffield, before the National Union, he enlarged on the programme of the United Empire Trade League, and supported the demand for Fair Trade by pointing to the increasing scarcity of employment in most of the skilled trades. The authority of Mr. Burns and Mr. Keir Hardie were invoked against the optimistic assurances of *laissez faire* Radicalism represented by such men as Mr. Mundella. Vincent's co-operation with the Labour Socialist leader was viewed with jealousy by some of the straighter sect of Democratic Socialists, and Mr. Keir Hardie was blamed for having entertained (at the opening of Parliament in 1893) Vincent's offer to second, on the Address, a vote of censure on the Government for having failed to recommend measures that would mitigate the existing distress. The fact was that Vincent, though with different remedies in view, had put down





COLONEL  
HOWARD VINCENT.

MR KEIR  
HARDIE.

EXTREMES MEET.

BOTH FRIENDS OF THE  
UNEMPLOYED.

notice of a similar motion, but courteously offered to give way to Mr. Keir Hardie and second the proposal. To the members of the Unemployed Organisation Committee he argued they would get more assistance from Unionists than Liberals—witness the Factory and Mines Acts, Merchant Shipping legislation and measures dealing with sanitation, workmen's dwellings, land purchase, allotments, small holdings, and free education. He was also sanguine of winning over to Tariff Reform a section of the working men politicians. The distance, he said, from Tower Hill to the Docks was not great. Let the unemployed go down to the river. They would see steamer after steamer bringing in foreign labour and foreign goods. Their eyes would tell them why wages were low and being reduced, why in those days of luxury and cheapness so many of our own people were workless, foodless, fireless, and shoeless.

It cannot be said that this appeal to Labour leaders produced much effect. Vincent's remedies were stoutly repudiated by all, or nearly all, the Trade Union officials and representatives whose sympathies, so far as political action was concerned, began and ended with organised labour. In the House of Commons, however, he obtained a solid backing of Conservatives, amongst them being several members standing well within the official circle, Mr. Chaplin being accompanied in the Lobby by Mr. Akers-Douglas, Sir William Hart-Dyke, Mr. Walter Long, Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. Stuart Wortley, and Sir John Gorst. Mr. Mundella was noticeably polite to Mr. Keir Hardie but snubby to Vincent, who, however,

got round afterwards on his old Sheffield antagonist by calling attention to the exercise of patronage at the Board of Trade. Out of twenty-one local correspondents appointed by the President, it was significant that nineteen happened to be Gladstonians. In ferreting out facts and compiling figures, Vincent's industry was tireless, so that at question time he was one of the most formidable of the Government's guerrilla assailants. On the importation of unstamped German knives and foreign pipes, on fluctuations in the rise of bread not corresponding with the prices of corn, and on dozens of similar topics, he was always ready with an interrogation. In the 1894 session, again he moved an amendment to the Address, and argued that the continued depression of British manufactures and industry could not be met by mere relief works. He asked for direct fiscal action and control of immigration. Amongst the admissions extracted from Ministers were that half the salt pork used in the Navy came from Denmark, that lubricating oil was bought for the Government from America, that gun-boats were supplied with French boilers, that German boats had been purchased by the Admiralty, that furniture and stationery were ordered from the United States and Germany. In each case, no doubt, the Minister challenged could give some sort of explanation, but the cumulative effect of the discussion was not altogether to be ignored, especially by a Government living from hand to mouth. A distinct hit was made by the agitation of British brush-makers against the competition of goods manufactured in foreign prisons. Vincent, backed by Mr. Keir Hardie





SIR HOWARD ON HIS HOBBY-HORSE

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and Mr. Labouchere, as well as several Conservative members, was soon ready with a Bill to prohibit absolutely the entrance of such articles. This he politely pounced upon Mr. Bryce (June, 1894), who had just gone to the Board of Trade, and succeeded, in consequence of strong Parliamentary expressions of opinion, in extracting a promise of consideration.

That was a start. But Vincent was resolved to apply further pressure and through the Labour leaders. In 1894 the Trade Union Congress was less distinctly political than it has since become. At the Norwich meeting he arranged for motions to be put down in support of his policy for the encouragement of British industry in the placing of Government contracts. Attention was also called to the printing of Blue Books in Scotland, with female labour, below the normal rate of wages, the contracts being given to "black-leg" establishments, and to the secrecy observed as to the names of contracting firms. In the House of Commons, having on one occasion got a night for a debate on hostile tariffs, and finding that the Government Whips did not mean to make a house, he gave a huge dinner-party at Westminster, and thus secured a sufficient attendance of justly sympathetic friends. He was soundly beaten, of course, in the division (nearly three to one) but he had got a good show for his hobby. The Government Whips had plotted a "count out," and he retaliated by keeping up their men until he chose to let them go to bed. There was always a good deal of the school-boy in him, and he revelled in the practical joke.

During Mr. Gladstone's tenure of office, it was not

to be expected that the Imperial side of Vincent's programme would be advanced. The weary veteran, clinging to power for one purpose only, declined, in April, 1893, to receive a deputation from the United Empire Trade League.

In personal courtesy, however, Mr. Gladstone was never lacking even towards an opponent for whom he had small liking. With his own hand he wrote Vincent four pages of explanation. "I thank you," he said, "for your letter, and I clearly understand that the purpose of your desire to confer with me is that you may recommend to the Government a method of trade legislation which would impose differential duties on the importation of foreign commodities into this country. I fear that my seeing a deputation on such a subject would lead to misapprehension and disappointment. It could hardly do less than convey to the public the idea that there might be circumstances under which I might be ready to recommend to my colleagues the adoption of such a plan. But since I am compelled to regard the plan as unjust to the mass of the community, unprofitable to the industry and enterprise of the country, and subversive of the legislation which it cost us twenty or twenty-five years to accomplish, you will perceive that with these opinions I am precluded in principle from the discussion of such a plan, and were I to receive a deputation in its favour I might be justly charged with acting under false pretences and giving encouragement to expectations which I did not mean to fulfil. You will, therefore, I am confident, on these grounds excuse me from receiving the deputation."

Nothing could have been more polite or less encouraging. Mr. Gladstone put so many public objects before development of the Empire, and his colleagues made such bad blunders in their handling of British affairs, that he was, somewhat unfairly, reckoned among the Little Englanders. Like most of the elder statesmen of his time, he believed that the one sound policy for the Mother Country in regard to the colonies was to leave them alone. Meantime, within the Imperial Federation League itself all was not harmony. Within its ranks were many Free Traders, so that the question of an effective preference was practically barred. Sir Charles Tupper, in a letter not intended for publication, had informed a Canadian correspondent that the most active members of the League were mainly intent on raising a large contribution from the colonies for the British Navy and Army. That was brought up in May at a meeting of the Executive Committee, and the difficulty was smoothed over for the time by a colourless resolution affirming that "any scheme of Imperial Federation should combine on an equitable basis the resources of the Empire for the maintenance of common interests and adequately provide for an organised defence of common rights."

Against the inopportune claim for increased colonial contributions to purposes of defence, Vincent, on behalf of the United Empire Trade League, published in the *National Review* an indignant disclaimer. In the future, no doubt, the self-governing colonies will enter into a satisfactory defence arrangement. For the present, the one urgent question was to develop

trade within the Empire on the lines laid down at the Imperial Conference held in July at Ottawa. That body recorded its belief in favour of a Customs arrangement under which commerce within the Empire could be placed on a more favourable footing than with foreign countries. Further, it was resolved, that until the Mother Country could enter into such an arrangement the individual colonies should be recommended to make fiscal arrangements one with another. Vincent wound up his article by quoting Cecil Rhodes's complaint against the Imperial Government that they "spent their whole time on small matters, but the big question of the trade of the people they neglected." To Vincent the Empire was Trade, and this principle, with all its legitimate extensions and incidental limitations, he made the governing rule of his public life. Essentially he was a business man, and to every political question brought the business frame of mind. In small matters as in great, he worked for the mutual benefit of a class, a nation, or an empire. He was by no means lacking in the higher elements of patriotism, but in his speeches and writings he seemed to ignore the ideal aspect, and this perhaps accounts for his comparative failure—and the failure of those associated with him—to rouse popular enthusiasm for the tariff propaganda. They relied simply or mainly on rows of figures, on statistics of trade depression, on unemployment; they appealed solely to the commercial instinct and the reason of the counting-house, forgetting that on paper an equally specious and tempting prospectus might be set forth on behalf of Free Trade. In this respect Vincent did himself an

injustice, for nobody was more keenly moved by the spirit of disinterested patriotism or believed more sincerely in the claims of blood and the unity of the British race. At the meeting of the National Union, towards the end of 1895, he let himself go a little and made a very effective speech in favour of a broad Imperial policy. For the time, unquestionably, the Preference Movement had been given a check—not substantially mitigated by the opinion of the law officers of the Crown on the effect of the commercial treaties of 1862 and 1865. In reply to Vincent's inquiry, it was noted in the House of Commons that, while not precluding differential arrangements between British colonies, they did bar any such understanding as between a colony and the Mother Country.

Nor was the position improved in regard to Preference when Mr. Gladstone had been succeeded as Prime Minister by Lord Rosebery, the Liberal Imperialist. Even if the old-fashioned Radicals, led by Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley, had not been the dominating element in the reconstructed Cabinet, it was, of course, beyond the purview of a tottering Administration, already overloaded with the unfulfilled articles of the Newcastle programme, even to contemplate a departure for which it had received no kind of popular mandate. It was therefore merely by way of keeping his cause before the mind of the country that in the debate on the Address in February, 1895, Vincent called attention to the proceedings of the Ottawa Conference.

It is always a difficult problem for the advocates of young or apparently forlorn causes how far it is

expedient to go on hammering away on their chosen text. If they relax their efforts, they expose themselves to the charge of faint-heartedness. On the other hand, they risk being classed with the cranks and the bores. It was a point on which Vincent, for one, never entertained the slightest hesitation. He cared nothing at all for unfavourable comments, and put his whole faith in continuous agitation, controversy, and advertisement. Whether he did not overdo it is another question. Certainly it damaged his personal position in the House of Commons.

During the 1892-5 Parliament, active as Vincent was in a variety of topics, ranging from Imperial Federation to prison-made brushes, he kept steadily in touch with his own constituency and worked hard for the whole party in view of the obviously not remote General Election. The time had come, he saw, when the Liberal Unionists should be drawn into closer association with the Conservatives, and, by way of preparing the necessary partnership, he organised on June 14, 1894, as Chairman of the National Union, a banquet in honour of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. This, he says in his private diary, was his own idea, but before acting upon it he had ascertained that the proposal would be acceptable both to the two groups that were to be convivially amalgamated and personally to the leaders. As to his own election, there was no shadow of a doubt. He was allowed to walk over, and thus enabled to work off some of his exuberant energy in speaking for less happily situated candidates. Nevertheless he did not neglect to present his supporters with a neat little booklet setting forth a



brief summary of his work during three busy and distracted sessions.

To Vincent personally the great Unionist victory of 1895 brought no personal advantage. For admission to the Government even in a subordinate capacity, he had disqualified himself by his unremitting devotion to Fair Trade. Fifteen years ago, curiously enough, the Imperial side of Fiscal Reform, in spite of occasional declamations about the People's Food, was regarded by Liberals as a comparatively harmless movement—possibly because it seemed so remote. But Fair Trade was anathema, and the slightest suspicion of that economic heresy would have broken up the Government. For the Liberal Unionists, who, eight years later, were to provide the most remorseless assailant of the Free Imports system, were in 1895 sublimely unconscious that the question could ever be raised by a responsible English statesman.

So much of the life of Sir Howard Vincent as was written by Mr. S. H. Jeyes ends at this point. The subsequent chapters are by another hand.

## CHAPTER XIV

### KINDNESS AND TACT

A GREAT deal has been said in previous chapters to show the activity of mind, resourcefulness, and untiring energy of Sir Howard. It was these qualities that seized upon the imagination of the general public, before whose eyes he liked to live. But there was another side to his life. It was not given to everyone to realise his tender-heartedness, his sympathy, and his tact, though all who came into close personal touch with him quickly discovered what store of them he possessed.

He was so full of compassion for the sufferings of others that he would often be moved to tears on seeing anyone in great pain or sorrow, and no trouble was too great for him to take if he saw a chance of bringing relief. To the old he was especially attentive, and understood how to get them to forget their ailments by drawing them into conversation about past days and letting them feel his interest and sympathy. He had a considerable list of old ladies whom he visited every Sunday, and he was always full of regret when, as time went on, first one and then another was removed by death. He never forgot old friends, faithfully keeping up not only his own,

but those of his father and mother also. But it was not only with the old or the sick that he could sympathise. He had a very taking way with children, who always seemed to be drawn to him almost unconsciously, and even with schoolboys—perhaps the most difficult to attract of all young people—he was just the same. He seemed to know exactly how to interest them and make them his friends, the result, no doubt, of that great-heartedness which made him enter so fully into the interests of others.

An excellent example is on record of the thoughtful kindness he was always ready to show to young people. He was once passing through the lobby of the House of Commons, when he espied two Westminster School boys, aged about thirteen and fourteen, hanging about. In a moment he had gone up, put his hand on one boy's shoulder, and asked them if they wanted to go into the Strangers' Gallery. Finding that this was so, he ran back and got an order for them, saying, as he gave it to them, "I was a Westminster boy myself." The very next morning came a letter of thanks from the two boys, who must have taken some trouble to find out his name and private address.

Servants were invariably fond of him. He was always considerate and extremely kind in his dealings with them, and even if sometimes in moments of worry and ill-health he showed a passing irritability, he was very sorry afterwards, and was anxious to show them that this was so.

Mr. Ernest Morgan, who was for some years Sir Howard's private secretary, in the course of an

appreciation specially written for this memoir, bears the following witness :

"*Self*, in letters of radium, is engraved upon the hearts of most people. But Sir Howard was the antithesis of this. He was an aristocrat, it is true, and sometimes, but not often, there would appear a hauteur in which were mingled tolerance, indifference, and affront—an expression that looked at one and yet over one. This shadow of atavism, however, would quickly pass, and his real nature—that of the real man—with its great gift of sympathy and understanding, would assert itself. Not only was he ever ready, within his means, to assist people financially, but he was always prompt with encouragement and praise. If ever man strove to leave the world better than he found it, that man was Sir Howard Vincent. One of his finest characteristics was his thoughtfulness for others, from the highest to the lowest. He seemed to understand and anticipate the needs of everyone with whom he came in contact.

. . . . .

"Only once was he cross with me during the six years I was with him."

Perhaps one of the most severe tests to which the amiability of a Member of Parliament is subjected is the perpetual demand of constituents and friends from the country to be provided with orders to go into the House and hear a debate. Sir Howard Vincent was on such friendly terms with so many people, and was moreover so extremely well known by name through the continual references to him in

the Press, that he received a larger number of such applications than most members, letters with this object frequently coming to him from people of whom he had not the slightest knowledge. Such was his kindness of heart, and, perhaps, his desire for popularity, that these requests were scarcely ever refused. He was always delighted to tell of a little incident that occurred in this connection. A red-hot Radical came up one day from Sheffield and wanted to get into the House. He waited in the lobby and, having learnt that both the Liberal members for Sheffield were in the House, sent in his name first to one and then to another of them—but all in vain! Then he tried one of the Conservative members, also without result. Finally he sent in his name to Sir Howard, and (to quote the man's own description) "in one moment he was out all cordiality and courteousness, ran back and got the order, took me up into the Gallery himself, and asked the usher to give me a good place and tell me who the speakers were." This man, on his return home, wrote a letter to the local paper telling this story, and ended up by saying that, though he had always worked hard and voted against Sir Howard, he could never do so again!

No doubt the usher carried out Sir Howard's injunction with thoroughness, for every attendant and official in the House was his friend, looking out for the kindly greeting of the member for Central Sheffield, which never failed them. It was always a special delight to Sir Howard to be able to do anything on behalf of Sheffield folk, and no greater proof of this could be afforded than the fact that when he went out

to South Africa in the early days of the war he says in one of his letters: "I will go and look for the son of one of our St. Philip's friends," who was at the front, and adds that "so many Sheffield friends write to me about relatives in hospital at Wynberg that I delay a day to make the enquiries they ask." No wonder Sir Howard stood high in the affections of his Sheffield constituents, and was triumphantly returned to Parliament in 1906, when so many of his party were routed at the polls.

One of the most striking examples of the self-denying work for others that Sir Howard was always ready to undertake is found in the account of his connection with the Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham. Mr. Richard Gardner, who was for some years Headmaster of the Institution, tells how on Sir Howard's appointment to the Chairmanship of the Board of Managers in 1880 he at once devoted his keen intellect and great energy to the reorganisation of the Institution, with the result that "many changes soon supervened both for the domestic comfort and education of the children." He gave up a great deal of time to this object, and, during the period of his Chairmanship, visited the Orphanage at least once and often twice a week. Mr. Gardner adds: "More especially was his interest shown in the Sunday morning services conducted by the Headmaster. On every Sunday that he had available he attended the service and read the lessons, being often accompanied by distinguished friends, amongst whom were his mother, Lady Vincent, Sir H. Selwyn Ibbetson, Sir

M. White Ridley, Sir Algernon Borthwick, and others. In the summer these services were held in the playing-field under a clump of very fine elm trees, which Sir Howard christened 'the Druids' Temple,' and it was his great delight to read the lessons at this spot surrounded by his friends."

In 1881 Sir Howard persuaded Sir William Harcourt, at that time Home Secretary, for whom he always had a great admiration in spite of political differences, to attend the first Annual Prize Distribution, a function which Sir Howard had started. He also set to work to improve the buildings of the Orphanage, with the result that in 1882 a new wing was erected, containing three lofty and commodious rooms for boys, girls, and infants. On July 8th of that year this wing was opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales, and was named the Prince of Wales' Wing. It was typical of Sir Howard Vincent to have thus secured the notice of those in high places for the Orphanage, for he was never content until he had attracted the attention of the most important personages to any matter in which he was specially interested.

But the real secret of Sir Howard's success in this as in so many of his undertakings, and the key to the beautiful character which underlay the rather restless energy which was so much in the public eye, was his tender-hearted care for individuals. It was not the Institution so much as the orphans for which he really cared. He gave expression to this in a letter to Mr. Gardner in answer to a proposal that the children of the Orphanage should be represented at his wedding.

"Their presence," he says, "would be very acceptable to me, for I am very fond of them individually and collectively." Ninety of the elder children, with most of the officials of the Orphanage, were consequently present at the marriage at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, on October 26, 1882.

The continuous interest Sir Howard took in the children individually is proved by the fact that he corresponded with many of them long after they left the Orphanage—a considerable task for a man as busy as he invariably was. It is recorded too that at one of the prize-givings at the Orphanage he singled out a crippled boy and said a few specially kind words to him, telling him to be sure to write and let him know how he got on, and to let him (Sir Howard) know if he wanted special help at any time. Every year for now thirty years Victor Cowan, now the father of a family and a compositor by trade, has written regularly to Sir Howard, and since 1908 to Lady Vincent, on New Year's Day.

His letter to Lady Vincent on the death of Sir Howard must be quoted :

" 3 CECIL GROVE, SOUTHSEA,

" 12th April, 1908.

" Lady Vincent.

" Dear Madam,

" Kindly allow me to add my expression of sincere regret to the many others at the death of Sir Howard.

" Twenty-eight years ago he took notice of me, a Police Orphanage boy, *lame*, with crutches, leaving



school handicapped, as he said, to start in life, and he made me promise that I would write to him on the first day of every year and tell him how I was getting on. And I faithfully have kept my promise, and have not missed during the twenty-eight years my annual letter to him, and have always received a suitable reply of counsel and satisfaction from Sir Howard.

. . . . .  
"So again expressing my sorrow,

"I remain,

"Yours respectfully,

"S. VICTOR COWAN."

The mention of Lady Vincent calls to mind how thoroughly she shared in Sir Howard's work, and in his sympathy and solicitude for the welfare of the Orphanage. As a substantial proof of this, when Sir Howard and Lady Vincent returned from their travels round the world, the latter wrote her book, *Forty Thousand Miles over Land and Sea*, expressly for the Orphanage children, and affectionately dedicated it to them.

In connection with Sir Howard's interest in and care for children it is interesting to observe that the Children's Courts now so successfully and universally used owed their origin largely to his initiative. In 1905 he supplied to the *Daily Graphic* a short account of his efforts on behalf of the Bill which created these courts for the special dealing with the offences of children. "In the *Daily Graphic* of June 22 you say: 'The creation of

Children's Courts for dealing with child offenders and regulating child employment is an urgent reform which should no longer be delayed or denied.' The illustration in the last number of the *Graphic* of the Children's Court at Birmingham and my explanatory article sent gratuitously for the children's sake by the editor to every member of the House of Commons has done immense service to the adoption in this country of a system found so advantageous in the United States, in Canada, in Australia, and even in Ireland. It has won over 669 representatives of the people. I have been twenty years in Parliament, and never saw greater unanimity for any measure than on Friday evening last, when, for about the twentieth time this session, I moved the little Bill drawn by the Government draughtsman, approved by the Home Office and Chief Magistrate, endorsed by every association concerned with the welfare of children, which I have brought in with the help of Mr. Samuel Smith, Sir John Gorst, Mr. Tennant, and Lord Edmund Talbot. But for the twentieth time it was blocked by one member, deaf to all appeals and entreaties from his own political friends, from all those knowing the evil resulting from the present state of affairs."

This letter drew from a leading Radical Non-conformist minister in Sheffield a strong expression of approval, in the course of which he said that Sir Howard's previous success in work, which (to quote Edmund Burke) set him "with the best of men in the best of their actions," gave strong hope that he would accomplish the rescue of the unfortunate

children of the nation from these unhappy associations, often for the most trivial contraventions of the letter of the criminal law. The writer went on to say, "Your Probation of First Offenders Act of 1887—though you only got part of what you desired—made us all, of whatever shade of politics, your debtor, and gave you a place among the great philanthropists of your country. . . . Permit me, a Liberal and Nonconformist, to express my admiration of the splendid service you have done for the youth of the nation, compared with which the craft of the diplomatist and the triumphs of Parliamentary oratory are trivial and evanescent."

Numberless examples, almost as striking as those recorded, might be given to exhibit the kindliness of the subject of this memoir, did space allow. But it is necessary to turn for a moment to a quality which may surely be considered a kindred gift, for the best sort of tact springs from consideration for others, and tactfulness was a marked characteristic of Sir Howard Vincent.

Those who were his guests at Grosvenor Square will remember how sometimes there would be a most uncongenial and incongruous mixture of people at luncheon or dinner, for he was most hospitable, and ready to include any chance-comer to London from the provinces in his invitations. At first sight it would seem impossible to make those present amalgamate or to thaw the frigidity of the atmosphere. But Sir Howard never failed to put every one at their ease, and by his tactful talk to make conversation general and the occasion pleasant.

Sometimes, too, he would go to a meeting and find all the arrangements badly made. Many men would show displeasure in such circumstances, but Sir Howard had too much tact for that. He would glance round, and instead of at once finding fault would wait a minute or two, and then throw out a quiet suggestion, proposing a few alterations in such a way as to make the responsible person fancy that they were his own ideas that he was carrying out.

The close connection with the kind-heartedness towards others which was such a leading characteristic of Sir Howard Vincent was his care for animals. He was a real animal lover. Lady Vincent says: "Our black poodle he treated as a human child and was quite ridiculous about him. He had, too, an enormous love for horses, . . . was unwilling for some years to have a motor, because he did not like to get rid of his horses. . . . He dearly loved his old black charger 'Basildon,' and used to say that this horse was quite human and understood everything he said to him. He had been given to us as a worn-out carriage horse, but had formerly been a hunter. We had him for twelve years and he is still alive and well, a pensioner at my daughter's place in Yorkshire. Sir Howard always described him as the most perfect mannered charger in existence, for he always capered and showed off at the right moment at an Inspection, and went past at the head of the regiment as proudly as if he commanded. His only fault was that he was so devoted to the band that he could hardly be persuaded to leave it for any other part of the field.



SIR HOWARD VINCENT ON "BASILDON"



Lord Wolseley once borrowed him to ride at a Birthday Parade, and very magnificent the old horse looked."

He was not content with making his own animals happy, but did all he could for those less fortunately situated. Thus it was at his house in Grosvenor Square that Madame Sarah Bernhardt gave a dramatic recital in aid of the Royal League of Mercy, and in 1907 he is found working for the protection of suffering animals in the House of Commons. He is described by the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* as having "achieved a record with his Injured Animals Act Amendment Bill, which passed through Grand Committee in twenty-one minutes, twenty-one days after its introduction." This Bill gave power to a veterinary surgeon called in by the police to order the destruction of any animal found in the street so severely injured or in such a physical condition that it would be cruel to keep it alive.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals received strong support from Sir Howard. Indeed, he served upon its Council for years and took an active part in its meetings, etc. There were many other Institutions with which he was connected and for which he worked for many years, such as the Police Pensioners' Society (founded by him), the Royal Welsh Fusiliers' Benevolent Fund (managed entirely by him), St. Giles' Christian Mission, the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, Dr. Barnardo's Homes, the Church Army and several more. It is hoped that enough has been said in this chapter to exhibit Sir Howard Vincent in a special and most

charming aspect, which was to some extent overlooked by those who saw in him merely a man whose aim seemed to be to keep himself prominently in the public eye.

In what had all this lovingkindness to his fellow creatures its spring? It is probably true to say that it flowed naturally from a simple religion which found in love the fulfilling of the law. It is certainly a fact that his religion was child-like in its simplicity. He cared very little for dogmas or creeds. He always said that he thought the clergy of all denominations were usually too narrow in their views. He was fond of going to hear different preachers, and preferred sermons which bore upon the events of the day. One Sunday he heard the news of the suicide of a very wealthy public character. "Ah!" he said, "what a sermon I would preach on his career and end if I were a clergyman!"

He was very catholic in his admiration for various clergy. Cardinal Manning was, it will be remembered, his godfather, and a friendship existed between the two men until the Cardinal's death—a friendship which was intimate enough to permit a free discussion between them of political and other more personal subjects. The last occasion of their meeting was at Archbishop's House, Westminster, about a fortnight before the Cardinal's death. Sir Howard was accompanied by his daughter, then a child of about seven, to whom the great ecclesiastic showed himself in his most charming aspect. She was wearing a little scarlet coat and cap, and the Cardinal asked her how she dared to wear his colour, at the same time taking



off his biretta and putting her cap on his head. He then gave her a picture of the Dresden Madonna on which, at Sir Howard's suggestion, he wrote his name.

Perhaps Sir Howard's greatest friend among clergymen was Dr. Bradley, Dean of Westminster, who was for some years chaplain to the Queen's Westminster Volunteers. In this connection and in arranging for the Annual Church Parade in the Abbey the two men were brought into frequent relations, and a strong mutual admiration was the result.

The City Temple proved an attraction to Sir Howard under the superintendence of both Dr. Parker and Dr. Campbell. He was in sympathy with the wide views of both men, and from both he was likely to hear sermons on the current topics of the day. It is remembered that he was particularly pleased when the former preacher on one occasion announced that the collection taken the previous Sunday on behalf of certain poor children had been so inadequate that the children should that day plead for themselves. Thereupon during the singing of the hymn "There's a Friend for little children," the little ones came round with the bags and made their own collection. It was just the kind of dramatic touch that appealed to Sir Howard.

In Dr. Campbell's time the Vincents were supplied by him with a card admitting them to the City Temple by a private door, and he used to send an usher to invite Sir Howard to come and talk to him in the vestry.

From what has been said it will be seen that no

strict bounds limited the range of Sir Howard's appreciation of services and preachers. His religious position is consequently difficult to define. That it was a real religion, bearing good fruit, this chapter should go far to prove.

## CHAPTER XV

### SIR HOWARD AS AN AUTHOR

**I**F all Sir Howard Vincent's writings were collected a number of thick volumes would be seen as the result. Nothing strikes one more forcibly on investigating his life and work than the amazing amount of literary labour that he accomplished. With all his manifold interests and perpetual change of scene and occupation the question as to how he could do it appears unanswerable. Here is Lady Vincent's description of a typical day at 1 Grosvenor Square: "Sir Howard liked getting up late in the morning, and doing a great deal in bed before rising. He would read all the newspapers and letters, have breakfast brought up to him, and, when that was finished, had his Secretary up and dictated part of his correspondence. After getting up he would, if there were time, go for a short ride. Then came interviews with people who came by appointment. Sometimes the morning-room, where he always sat and wrote, would have more than one visitor at a time, and others would be waiting in the dining-room and hall. Then he would attend a Committee at the House of Commons, come back to luncheon, and be off again to attend any number of meetings on all sorts of subjects. He would on most days also put in an appearance at his

office in Palace Chambers. In the evening he was frequently to be found at public dinners; I have known him dine out in this way four or five nights running. If he were free he came home to dinner and then went back to the House of Commons. He used to write late at night."

The last sentence provides the answer to the question as to how he could find time to do all the writing that he accomplished, but it was an extraordinary proof of energy and determination on the part of a man never really robust to sit himself down after such a day's work at the big writing table in the morning-room and write well into the small hours of the morning.

His literary output was created at full speed. Mr. Morgan, his private secretary, in writing of him uses such expressions as: "He possessed an extraordinary driving force"; "He was full of ideas: immediately a suggestion was made upon any subject, his lightning brain would illumine it from all sides"—"To conceive a thing with him was to accomplish it, in working with him it was absolutely necessary to jump into his stride at once"—"He had a great mental activity that could brook no restraint."

With a mind such as is thus described it becomes a little easier to understand the great number of pamphlets, essays, newspaper articles, letters, etc., which came from his pen. It has also to be remembered that with the exception of riding he gave no time to the ordinary amusements which take up a part of most men's life, for he cared nothing for golf, cricket, tennis, boating or any such things.

The interruptions to his work were apt to be of quite a different kind. It not seldom happened that when he managed to get a little time at his writing table in the morning some tiresome visitor would turn up, and Sir Howard would be at his wits' end to get rid of the intruder without any loss of that unfailing consideration for others which marked him out from the ordinary man. One plan he had for effecting this purpose—a plan that rarely failed. He would get up and walk aimlessly about the room, round and round, until in a time that was generally remarkably brief his visitor got up, said good-bye, and left Sir Howard to continue his writing.

A considerable amount of time must have been occupied every day in writing such letters as could not be dictated to a secretary. These would include the more important and confidential letters concerning his political and other interests, but chiefly those which were of a purely personal nature, prompted by his kindness of heart, of which the value would be greatly diminished if his correspondents did not receive them in Sir Howard's own handwriting. Such would be letters to old boys from the Police Orphanage, to which allusion is made elsewhere, and letters to greet their recipients on birthdays and other anniversaries for which Sir Howard had an unfailing memory. When writing to relations he often headed his letter with some such announcement as: "This is the 33rd anniversary of so and so's birth or death," and with reference to this habit one of his brothers once began a letter to him dated "This is the 80th anniversary of our grandmother's confirmation, and the 31st of our parents' marriage"!

But, after all, letters were the easiest part of his literary labours. In the late night hours he composed and put on paper newspaper articles, pamphlets, and reports of his investigations in many directions, with a diligence and rapidity that was amazing. Had he visited Russia or witnessed the army manœuvres of a foreign State, a long and accurate report would be drawn up and forwarded either to the King or to the Secretary of State for War. Had he undertaken any specially interesting work in Parliament some account would assuredly be written for the benefit of his Sheffield constituents.

Sir Howard's writings began at an early date. By 1885 his published works already consisted of *Stoffel's Report upon the Russian Army*, 1871; *Elementary Military Geography*, and *Reconnoitring and Sketching*, 1873; *The Law of Criticism and Libel*, 1876; *The Improvement of the Volunteer Force*, 1878; *Procedure d'Extradition*, 1880; and a *Police Code and Manual of the Criminal Law*, 1881. This last-named work was one of the most important and useful of all Sir Howard's publications. It has gone through a number of editions, the tenth being dedicated to Sir William Harcourt. Lord Brampton wrote to the author to say that he could not express the extent to which the public owed gratitude to Sir Howard for presenting to the police of this country a guide enabling them, with the assistance of their able officers, to become the splendid body of men they were. Dr. Anderson, a subsequent Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, declared that none but an expert could properly appreciate how admirably the book

supplied a need, and added, "I am increasingly impressed and surprised at its completeness."

Another "Guide" of a different nature also came from Sir Howard Vincent's pen. This is a little book, still well known and greatly appreciated, which is entitled, *How we are Governed*, or *A Guide for the Stranger to the Houses of Parliament*. It is marvellously complete, accurate, descriptive, and, withal, chatty in style. It is also illustrated with photographs and an excellent plan of the buildings. It was the outcome of the fact that Sir Howard was so continually asked to show people over the Houses of Parliament, and he saw how useful such a booklet would be. He used to present a copy to all those whom he conducted over the House, signing his name and inserting the date by way of a memento.

Probably the most widely known of anything that he produced is the "Howard Vincent Map." In public buildings in many parts of the world, in village schoolrooms all over England, may be seen this map with the British possessions coloured red. It was suggested by his strong spirit of imperialism, and has done much to keep that spirit alive in a degenerate age.

It was used, with an impression of the Union Jack above it, as an election leaflet. Underneath the map were the words: "It is to Maintain, to Strengthen, and, if need be, to extend this Empire, to render it unassailable for all time that the Elector has now the privilege of a vote. Will he use it to Build, to Consolidate, or to Destroy? His children will ask him."

A notable appreciation of this map has been preserved in a letter from the Librarian of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, in which Sir Howard is thanked for the "splendid map of the British Empire," which the writer said that he should display in the hall-way of the library, so that all cadets might see what a proud country Sir Howard belonged to, and how desirable it was that the two countries should be friends.

It would make this volume far too long if any description were given of one-tenth of the booklets written by Sir Howard. The variety of their subjects amazes the reader almost as much as the detailed information they contain. There was one upon *Russia and India*, published in 1903, consisting of a series of articles written for his constituents after he had attended the Great Coronation Durbar at Delhi. There was another on the *Origin, Constitution, and Administration of the Suez Canal*, being an expansion of an address delivered by him to the London Chamber of Commerce in 1905. There were various papers and pamphlets which his visit to the Boer War evoked, such as *In a Boer Concentration Camp* (originally written for *The Times*), and *British Volunteers in South Africa—What they did, and how they did it*.

Finally there was the mass of political leaflets of which he was the author. Thousands of these, written in his concise graphic style for the National Union of Conservative Associations, of which he was on the Literature Committee and Council, were distributed at every election time, and proved most popular.



Others he wrote for the Primrose League, of which also he was an active member of Council, and it is one of these that must be quoted as an excellent example of Sir Howard Vincent's style. It is entitled *A Call to Arms*.

"Primrose Leaguers, you have done well in the past. The Grand Master, the Marquess of Salisbury, the most experienced, the most respected, and most influential statesman in the world, has said so at Grand Habitation.

"The victories of 1886, the successes of 1892, the triumph of 1895 prove his words. It is you who have largely aroused the patriotism of Britain. It is you who have taught Britons to realize their Empire, their Might, their Power.

"Now is the time to be up and doing. This is the moment for active work, and work only. This is The Election for You. Radicals have sought in previous contests to dismember the United Kingdom, to cut off Ireland, to establish on our coasts an enemy.

"You defeated them. You have laid HOME RULE low.

"Now it is your Empire which is attacked.

"South Africa calls to you; Canada calls to you; Australasia relies upon you; India looks to you.

"The Boers have allies in your House—the Radicals. Not all of them. Some, like Sir Henry Fowler, are honest and patriotic. But they are overwhelmed by the pro-Boer, the anti-British tail.

"Others correspond with the enemy.

"‘Seize the Passes!’ says one to General Joubert.

“ ‘Give Joe another fall!’ says another.

“ ‘Undo all the work of the war!’ say others. ‘Let it all begin again.’

“ ‘Our brothers in khaki rely on you.

“ ‘The wounded, the sick, call to you: ‘We have suffered that you may reap.’

“ ‘Members of the Primrose League, men and women of Great Britain, up and work! Take every man to the poll. Forward with the sluggard. Your soldier sons, husbands, brothers, will soon be home. As you place the laurel wreath on their foreheads say, ‘We have been working, too, for Empire!’

“ ‘It will be a double welcome. Remember the immortal words: ‘The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.’

“ ‘Empire must be your gift to your children.

“ ‘Again, work! work! work! Before the Election. On the day of the Poll. The struggle will be short. Victory is certain. Make it overwhelming.

“ ‘This is what Great and Greater Britain expects, asks—what they rely on you to do.

“C. E. HOWARD VINCENT.”

If all Sir Howard's writings were as terse and vivid as the above there is no need for surprise at their popularity.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SIR HOWARD VINCENT AS A VOLUNTEER

SOME people will remember Sir Howard Vincent chiefly as a politician, a prominent advocate of Tariff Reform, and the popular Member for Central Sheffield. Others, looking rather further back, are more impressed by his work at Scotland Yard and his connection with the sensational drama of the Phoenix Park murders. But to a very large number of people, especially to the inhabitants of London, he will ever be best known as a pre-eminently successful Commander of Volunteers.

After holding a commission for five years in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, he retired in 1873, and was gazetted captain in the Royal Berkshire Militia. After two years he left that corps to become Lieutenant-Colonel of the Central London Rangers, a volunteer corps which he thoroughly reorganized before, in 1878, his appointment to the post of Director of Criminal Investigations compelled him for a time to lay aside all military work. After six years of arduous work at Scotland Yard he resigned his appointment and was gratified by the offer of the command of the Queen's Westminsters. This was in 1884, and from that year dates the interesting and successful period of twenty years, during which Sir

Howard worked unceasingly for the welfare of that regiment.

It is interesting to be able to quote his own words on the reason why he became a Volunteer. They are contained in an article he wrote for the *Tatler* in 1904: "Why did I become a Volunteer? Because I have always held—and still hold—that it is the duty of a man to his Sovereign and his country, if under forty years of age and not serving in the regular Army, the Militia, or Yeomanry, to join the Volunteer force." This patriotic spirit was the mainspring of the energy and devotion he exhibited not only in all his military work, but, in conjunction with a strong infusion of Imperialism, of all his manifold political aspirations.

No sooner had he taken command of the regiment than he started to improve the conditions under which it had hitherto existed. He saw that the most crying necessity was for sufficient and convenient headquarters, and in June, 1884, he put out a circular, in the course of which he said that, for a regiment nearly a thousand strong, the house temporarily rented in Buckingham Palace Road afforded no proper accommodation for a drill-hall, for the storage of arms, or for those reading and club rooms which are so valuable in holding a regiment together, and developing the great moral utility of the Volunteer force by the provision of recreation and good association as well as of physical exercises.

The circular concluded with an appeal to inhabitants of the City of Westminster to come forward with subscriptions. Buckingham Palace being situated in

Westminster, Sir Howard was fortunate in obtaining the name of Queen Victoria to head the list of subscribers. The Duke of Westminster, the honorary Colonel, gave £500, the regiment gave £500, and by the aid of meetings and the generosity of various public bodies and private persons, sufficient funds were collected, a mortgage which had to be raised being ultimately cleared off during Sir Howard's command. The total expenditure exceeded £6000. The new head-quarters were erected upon a site in James Street, Buckingham Gate, then covered with small cottages, a ninety-nine years' lease of which ground was obtained.

The opening ceremony was performed on May 22, 1886, by the Duchess of Westminster, who wore the colours of the regiment. The Duke, in the course of his speech, said: "Colonel Howard Vincent had come in as a new broom and swept away a great deal of the association of the past. Fired with that enthusiasm which was one of the great elements of his character, and happily so, he had plunged most recklessly into debt with the best intentions—(laughter)—and if the Colonel did not soon recoup the amount that was necessary to defray the debt still upon the building he was not the man he had taken him for."

Sir Howard not only was the promoter of the building of these head-quarters, but after he had resigned the command in 1904, when, under a clause of Lord Haldane's Army Bill, there was great danger lest the premises should become common property in conjunction with the possessions of other corps, he was able, through his personal influence, to get the

War Office to take over the head-quarters in trust for the Queen's Westminsters.

In 1888 the Queen's Westminsters had already under their colonel's untiring supervision become a smart corps, and were commended when they paraded in Hyde Park for inspection by Colonel Stracey. On that occasion thirty-eight officers, fifty-six sergeants, and 811 band, buglers, and rank and file were present.

In the following year there is evidence of the real hard work to which they were subjected, for Colonel Vincent took six hundred of them with mounted infantry and cyclists' corps down to Canterbury, where they were located in barracks and practised long parades, battalion and brigade movements, route marching, outpost duty, etc.

It is just as well to give prominence to this fact, for there was a feeling at that time, to which unfortunate expression was given in the House of Commons, that the volunteers were only playing at being soldiers. This idea was to some extent fostered by the inimitable drawings of John Leech in *Punch*, who had mercilessly caricatured the earlier volunteer movement.

There is no doubt that Sir Howard Vincent, while sparing no pains to make his regiment efficient, immensely enjoyed the pageantry of mimic warfare. It has been said of him that he "loved the panoply and pomp of his uniforms, and took the simplest and most childlike pleasure in them." He was quite aware of this little weakness, and often joined in a laugh against himself about it. He really seems to have enjoyed levées, Speaker's receptions, Court balls, volunteer parades, and all such occasions, simply



REVIEW OF THE QUEEN'S WESTMINSTERS IN HYDE PARK





because he then wore his uniform, medals, orders, and decorations. Of the latter he had by the end of his life a considerable number, which included the C.B., K.C.M.G., V.D., Legion of Honour, Diamond Jubilee Medal, South African War Medal, Order of St. John of Jerusalem, an Italian Order, and a German Order—a list which points to the versatility of his career.

Except when in uniform, he was not a notably smartly dressed man, being, indeed, rather indifferent to his clothes. This may be a good place to give some personal description of the Colonel of the Queen's Westminsters, so well known by sight to the Londoners of those days as he rode at the head of his regiment. His height was 5 feet 10½ inches—the height which perhaps looks best of all on horseback—and his figure was excellent. He had keen blue eyes, and an aquiline nose of considerable size, beneath which a heavy moustache, brown like his hair, concealed his mouth. His chin was short but square, and denoted that pertinacity for which he was well known. But in addition there was a kindliness of expression and a humorous twinkle that came and went, which gave the careful observer an impression of the very human person who rode by in all the glory of regimental command. One special occasion occurred in 1891 which was quite after Sir Howard's own heart. The German Emperor was on a visit to this country, and had expressed a desire to inspect a representative Volunteer regiment. The choice fell on the Queen's Westminsters. Sir Howard's delight may be imagined. He was told that owing to the

Emperor's many engagements an early hour would have to be fixed, and not much more than twenty-four hours' notice could be given.

With his usual energy Sir Howard made nothing of these difficulties. The place selected was the private garden at Buckingham Palace, and this added a little to the delay in making preparations, for the officials were nervous as to the prospect of damage, and had to be talked over. Another difficulty lay in the fact that so many of the men lived in distant suburbs, and, as the inspection was to take place at eight o'clock, or soon after, the regiment would have to assemble by 6.30 a.m. To meet this it was arranged that two hundred men should be quartered for the previous night in the drill-hall, while the officers were accommodated in a rough-and-ready way in their mess-rooms. Everything was carried out to perfection. The regiment fell in at 6.30 a.m. seven hundred and ninety strong with mounted infantry, cyclists' corps, and transport. The Emperor held the inspection with royal punctuality, and was accompanied by the Empress, the Duke of Connaught, and several generals from the Head-quarters Staff. The Emperor gave warm praise to the regiment, and subsequently presented it with his portrait. It is said that he was so much impressed with what he saw at that early morning inspection that he expressed his surprise afterwards that England did not put to more use the zeal which could accomplish so much.

How was it that this almost impromptu parade and inspection under such exalted and critical circumstances was such a complete success? Simply because

Colonel Vincent had been gradually working up the regiment from the day he took over the command until they were ready to stand any test. He was loyally and effectively backed up by his officers, but they would one and all declare that it was he and he alone who "made the regiment." Here is a quotation from a letter written to Sir Howard by a former adjutant of the Queen's Westminsters.

"The thoroughly sound system on which everything is based in the regiment is entirely due to your great master mind, and, believe me, such a system does not exist in any other Volunteer battalion in the world. . . . Your name and *your name alone* is a talisman in the regiment, and every single man in it would give you of his very best."

It is hardly necessary to seek further for the reason of the efficiency of the corps. But the following words which have been written on the subject are too valuable to pass over: "The knowledge that their Colonel was their friend promoted the men's loyalty, and he showed a full appreciation of how, to obtain the maximum of efficiency from a body of men who from the very nature of the case could practise only in their leisure and at intervals. The first condition to be complied with was not to insist on such efforts and such endurance of strain as may fairly be required from the professional soldier who is in practice every day. Much of that effort and strain is not essential to qualify men to fight. It belongs to the traditional, perhaps the necessary, 'dressing' of the professional soldier. In war it is dropped, and when too much insisted

upon in peace does not tend to efficiency. It looks well, no doubt, that a body of men should be able to keep still for a long interval. But the strain of maintaining a rigid attitude for more than a few minutes is severe, as anyone can promptly prove for himself by experience. Therefore Vincent made it a rule to allow his men to stand at ease in every interval of actual practice, and not to keep them at attention. On field days when the time had come for the 'pow-wow' of the officers, he would insist, even when high military authorities were present, on allowing the regiment to be dismissed. He also always asked the chaplain to allow the men to lie down during the sermon at field service. All needless exertion was an offence to him. On the march and in hot weather he would himself give orders to open out the fours, so as to allow of a space for air between the men, and to minimise the raising of dust. Nothing which tends to preserve the good humour of the men and to dispose them to tackle serious work cheerfully is of small importance. Attention to small points such as these makes all the difference between an army which knows that it is not being taxed by needless burdens and is therefore willing, and one that is stupefied by excess of formalities and therefore works mechanically and ill. It is quite possible for soldiers, and sailors too, to do their work so as not to incur punishment, and yet to do it obtusely and so as to throw the maximum of trouble on their officers.

"Whatever could tend to lighten work was encouraged by Vincent. On one occasion at least he

allowed men in camp to practise in their shirt sleeves. His visits to South Africa, and what he saw there of the Boers, the Colonial corps, and the regulars themselves, when contact with the realities of war had, so to speak, rubbed off the pipeclay, increased his indifference to mere uniformity of dress when work was to be done.

“ But he could be strict enough on occasion—such as an inspection on ceremonial parade—when such a thing as the undue display of a white shirt collar would bring a smart word of reprimand. At all times he was vigilant in impressing on the regiment the importance of doing real work in a workmanlike way, and not only the importance but the good sense. To be able to stand like a graven image in the intervals of work is not indispensable to efficiency, but to perform manœuvres steadily and to shoot straight are indispensable, and are to the advantage of the soldier. That steady drill is good drill, *and is also short drill*, was a maxim he never failed to repeat.”

When to the above account is added the fact that Sir Howard not only encouraged athletic sports in the regiment, but joined in them himself, that he gave a silver shield as a company prize for shooting, that he immensely improved the equipment of the corps by mounted infantry, cyclists, signallers, machine-guns, and transport, that he left the regiment twice as large as he found it, and that Lord Roberts declared it to be the most complete regiment he had ever seen, no other evidence is necessary of Sir Howard's popularity and success in command.

One bit of practical work he was able to accomplish for the whole Volunteer force. It was on his motion in the House of Commons that a Select Committee was appointed in the spring of 1891 to enquire into the provision of ranges throughout the country. In May this Committee presented its report, and before the end of the session "The Ranges Act, 1891," became law. By this Act lands for ranges or other military purposes may, on certain conditions, be acquired under the compulsory powers of the Lands Clauses Act by Volunteer corps, or the county or borough councils, who are also permitted to borrow money for the purpose—with the consent of the Secretary for War, on the security of the land and of the capitation grant—from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, i.e. at a very much smaller interest than would otherwise have to be paid.

It was during the nineties that the present Colonel Hubert Legh became Sir Howard's adjutant, and it is fortunately possible to quote largely from an important appreciation written by Colonel Legh, which fills up all omissions in the above description of Sir Howard's command, and moreover gives a vivid personal picture of the man :

"Unfortunately for myself, it was only in the latter portion of his life that I enjoyed the privilege of what I may call an intimate acquaintance with Sir Howard Vincent. By that time I believe that his interests, which had been so various in his earlier life, were, if I may say so, centred in his daughter and his Volunteer regiment, the Queen's Westminsters.

"From my observation of him, and there were few days on which I did not come into contact with him, he was by then a somewhat disappointed man so far as his greater ambitions were concerned.

"His political aspirations as regards Imperial Preference and such kindred movements were now becoming popular in a large section of the Party to which he belonged. But at this period he was no longer young, and his nature, which at no time had been adapted for a secondary position, was now too much set and crystallised to allow him with advantage to take any but the leading position in the movement.

"Unfortunately there were other more prominent men who stood before him, now that largely owing to his hard work the movement had taken an assured hold upon the imagination of the public. *Sic vos non vobis*. It is my opinion that at this point of his life his extraordinary perspicacity and insight told him he must stand aside from the big game of politics.

"This loss to one side of public matters was the gain of the Queen's Westminsters and of the Volunteer movement generally. The interest and energy he displayed in furthering the cause of the regiment were incredible. The German Emperor comes to London, Sir Howard Vincent's regiment is produced for his inspection; a new head-dress comes into vogue for the Army, the Queen's Westminsters are the first Volunteers to wear it through the streets of London.

"Living, as Sir Howard did, in the midst of affairs, and therefore knowing all that was going on, he had opportunities of advancing his own regiment which

were denied to many other colonels. These opportunities he never neglected, nor was he ever shy of asking favours, not for himself, but for his regiment. The officers and men fully realised all this, and there was no lack of gratitude. I doubt if any military commander ever had such a hold on the affections of his subordinates as the colonel-commandant of this crack corps of London Volunteers. I do not think I am saying too much if I describe his rule as that of a benevolent despot.

“His influence was absolutely paramount and obtained by sheer personal strength of character, and not, as in many regiments, by a lavish expenditure of money. I know, indeed, of many cases of pecuniary assistance which he gave to old members of the regiment, and still more instances in which his influence obtained good appointments for deserving applicants. But the Queen’s Westminsters were not to any large extent composed of men with whom the hope of pecuniary assistance was a consideration, so that Sir Howard’s kindly actions in this respect were not often the result of applications by his men.

“While touching upon this side of his character, may I say that I have never known a man with such an accurate perception of the merits of any application for assistance. When he saw that by reason of the fraudulent nature of the application the case was a hopeless one he was ruthless in his refusal. If all trades were to fail, he could still have made a perfect charity organiser!

“As regards the military side of his character he was a born leader of men. But like many leaders he



was not easily led. He was always impatient of control, and I fear he had no great respect for the military hierarchy. I should say he had a contempt for the minutiae of drill, and knew very little of it. On one occasion he said to me, 'Don't bother me with drill! That is the work of an Under-Secretary!' I think it was only politeness that made him say Under-Secretary: I think he meant Adjutant, which was my office at the time. Yet, in spite of his ignorance of the Drill Book, I never knew him, when working with other troops, make a fool of himself or of his regiment. The exact word of command he gave was generally quite unknown in any military book, but somehow the required manœuvre always worked out!

"I remember on one occasion—at Aldershot, I think—when he was in command, so far as I recollect, of a composite battalion made up of the 'Old Grey Brigade,' a staff officer gave him the order to occupy a certain bit of rising ground and to avoid exposing his command to the view of the supposed enemy.

"The word of command he gave was: 'Now, you fellows, we are to occupy that hill. *Creep!*'

"I shall never forget the expression on the face of that staff officer—a smart young Guardsman. For some time the nickname 'Creepers' stuck to the composite battalion, while 'Creep like a Soldier of the Queen's' at our camp sing-songs paraphrased the then popular song, 'Die like a Soldier of the King.'

"Sir Howard had a great partiality for tall men in his regiment. Another thing he particularly liked

was the sound of the bugles. The band had no attraction for him save for social functions as an advertisement for the regiment. His ideal in music was fifty or sixty good bugles, with a 6 ft. 4 in. Bugle-Major pacing in front. In this respect he was a great admirer of the French Army. I think also in other ways the military ideals of France were more congenial to him than those of Germany.

"As regards his regiment, he believed in what his detractors would call advertisement. In this, as in many other respects, he clashed with more old-fashioned ideas. It is said that he once declared that were it not for show and advertisement the British public would not pay the salaries of Guards Colonels! He did not mean this literally, but he was intolerant of those who would not recognise the advertising tendency of the age. As a matter of fact he believed in the Guards, and it was always rather a grievance with him that his regiment, though brigaded with the Scots Guards for most purposes, was attached for purposes of interior economy to the King's Royal Rifles. When a vacancy for a staff-sergeant occurred he always tried to obtain a Guardsman rather than a Rifleman. He always thought that Guardsmen were more men of the world than linesmen—besides which they were taller!

"Sir Howard speedily recognised mediocrity in his superiors when it existed, even though it were accompanied by a far more thorough knowledge of the Drill Book than he possessed. Under these mediocrities he was impatient of control. He was also such a convinced believer in the Volunteer move-

ment that he could ill tolerate the assumption of superiority of regulars over that force. In those days when a regular officer went in any capacity to work with Volunteers there is no disguising the fact that the general opinion in the Army would be that he was going for a loaf, and in many cases for a gentle ending to his career.

“With this conception Sir Howard would never agree. According to him the best military officers ought to be sent to the Volunteers, if only because the Volunteers would at once detect inferiority. It is a pity that he is not here now to see the realisation of his wish. The best of our generals, and those who are known to be the men who would have important commands in time of war, are now sent to the Territorial Army—the lineal descendants of the old Volunteers. As in politics so in military matters, the views so often expressed by Sir Howard are now becoming popular.

“It will have been apparent from what I have said how difficult it was for a nature like his to accommodate itself to the military ideals of those days. But if he was *difficile* to his superiors he was ideal in his relations to those acting under him. It is impossible to imagine a more satisfactory chief. Here is an extract from a letter he sent me shortly after I became his adjutant :

““While you are my adjutant I expect you to do in my absence what you honestly believe I would do were I present. Don't hesitate to take responsibility. Do not trouble to refer to me in minor matters. If I give you an order which you believe

to be given under a misapprehension, don't hesitate to disobey it. I will always see that you know my policy in any matter. Act in consonance with it. Don't fear making mistakes. If you make one, tell me frankly, and I will back you up as if I had made it myself. But don't make a fool of me, and don't let me hear of your mistake from other people.'

"I have never known anyone with such an extraordinary knowledge of both sides of human nature. I think his knowledge of the seamy side prevailed, as, with his police experience, was perhaps natural.

"He did not, as he would call it, waste time over the minor technicalities of the military or other professions with which, in his versatile career, he was connected. He once said to me, 'Any fool can learn enough about riding not to fall off. That is the technique of the business. But the best horseman is he who can coax an extra half mile or an extra turn of speed out of his horse.' It was not the feat he looked to, but the power to influence the horse ; and as with the horse so with men.

"As a humble admirer may I sum up my respectful opinion of this remarkable man ?

1. "Averse to control, yet the kindest of chiefs.
2. "Intolerant of weakness, yet constantly aiding and befriending weak people.
3. "Absolutely fearless, both morally and physically, yet at times nervous as a girl in anticipation of the most trivial function.
4. "Inclined towards French methods, especially in military matters, yet I should say his ideal men among contemporaries were the German

Emperor and Sir William Vernon Harcourt. As regards his admiration for the former I express merely my own opinion, but as regards the latter I have often heard Sir Howard declare that the best chief he ever served was Sir William Vernon Harcourt.

"In my turn I say that the best chief I ever served was Sir Howard Vincent."

Such a valuable appreciation as the foregoing leaves little to be said as to the kind of man who commanded the Queen's Westminsters for twenty years.

In the spring of 1903 Sir Howard had a very serious illness. His heart, sorely tried by the racking cough which had troubled him nearly all his life, suddenly showed signs of alarming weakness and all engagements had to be cancelled. By the doctor's orders he moved to Eastbourne in April, but was reported as "still very weak and quite unfit for any exertion." In the following month the Sheffield press announced that he was well enough to be sent off for a sea voyage to Marseilles, and in June there came the satisfactory announcement that "A splendidly improved appearance brought showers of congratulations upon Sir Howard Vincent in the Lobby of the House of Commons to-day. His sea voyage has evidently done him a world of good."

But although his recovery was so far satisfactory, he had had a sharp warning. It was plain that he must curtail his work wherever possible, and it was for this reason that he most reluctantly determined to resign

the active command of the Queen's Westminsters at the beginning of 1904.

The history of his twenty years' service cannot be better summed up than in the words of his own "Farewell Orders" of 1st March, 1904 :

"Upon February 27th, 1884, I had the honour of being appointed Colonel Commandant of the Queen's Westminster Volunteers in succession to the late Colonel Bushby, v.d. During these twenty years the regiment has been my greatest pride and my greatest pleasure. Thanks to the zeal, the devotion, the discipline, and I may perhaps say, the affection of the officers, the non-commissioned officers, and the members there has scarcely been a disagreeable word throughout this long period. Every year showed a steady advance in numbers and organisation, until during the South African War the regiment was increased to two battalions and numbered a total of nearly 1,900 of all ranks. The reports of the inspecting officers (General Moncrieff, General Stracey, General Sir William Gascoign, General Barrington Campbell, Colonel Fludyer, Colonel Inigo Jones, c.b., with General Lord Methuen, g.c.b., and General Sir Henry Trotter commanding the Home District) have been uniformly appreciatory and encouraging not less as to the strength, equipment, and preparation for service of all ranks than as to the general efficiency. Every distinction which it has been possible for a Volunteer Corps to receive has been its good fortune during the twenty years. It has been individually inspected by three Commanders-in-Chief, H.R.H.

The Duke of Cambridge, K.G., Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, K.P., and by Field Marshal Earl Roberts, K.G., who last year declared it to be 'the most complete regiment he had ever seen.' His Imperial Majesty, William II, German Emperor, and His Highness Nasrullah Khan of Afghanistan have also been pleased to inspect it in detail. Every Secretary of State for War has visited it, as well as many distinguished officers from Greater Britain, the United States and foreign countries. At the Golden Jubilee, as at the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign and at the Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII the Regiment furnishing the Guard of Honour at the entry of the Sovereign to the City of Westminster, and the Mayors, Aldermen, and Burgess, as well as the Deans and Chapters of the Abbey, have given many proofs of their regard for it as the Westminster Regiment. It led the movement in volunteering for Active Service in South Africa, and furnished over three hundred officers and men for the field. In shooting it has won the Queen's and every important prize in the country, and in the Rifle Association at Wimbledon and Bisley. The head-quarters erected in 1886 have proved most convenient, and the Week End Shooting Lodge at Bisley, a considerable advantage. Nor has finance proved any difficulty, the assets at the present time being largely in excess of the liabilities.

"For such a state of affairs I desire to express my deep gratitude to the officers, the non-commissioned officers, and the members during these twenty years, whose public spirit, generous devotion of leisure to the

service of the country, zeal, ability, and generosity have enabled the results to be achieved."

The "General Orders" for April, 1904, contained the following announcements :

1. "*London Gazette*.—Colonel Sir C. E. Howard Vincent, K.C.M.G., C.B., A.D.C., V.D., M.P., to be Honorary Colonel.

2. "Resignation of Colonel Sir Howard Vincent.—Colonel-Commandant George Trollope (his successor) cannot allow the occasion of Sir Howard Vincent relinquishing the command of the regiment to pass without placing on record, on behalf of all ranks, their great regret that he has felt it necessary to resign, and their deep sense of the unwearied zeal with which he discharged the onerous duties of his command for so many years.

"His universal military knowledge of almost all countries, his just judgment and great experience, combine to make him an acknowledged leader of the Volunteer Force.

"On his retirement he carries with him, besides the respect and admiration of all who have had the privilege of serving under him, a lasting gratitude for the fatherly kindness with which he at all times looked after their interests and those of all who appealed to him, in whatever relation of life, whenever his help was requested."

The last paragraph of this announcement exactly expresses the feeling towards Sir Howard that existed in the regiment, a feeling which made their parting



gift to him of a silver lion, and to Lady Vincent of an amethyst and diamond tiara, something much more than a mere formality. These gifts were greatly prized by Sir Howard, as was the sword of honour which the regiment had given him some years before on the occasion of his knighthood.

It was a source of much satisfaction to Sir Howard that on his retirement from the active command he succeeded to the honorary colonelcy in succession to the Duke of Westminster, and so his connection with his dear old regiment was maintained.

In that same year (1904) he paid a visit to America. He had some five years before invited the 7th Regiment of the National Guard of New York to send a company to march at the head of the Queen's Westminsters at the Centenary Review of 1899. This invitation was not accepted *in toto*, but two officers of the 7th attended to represent their regiment. Sir Howard seems to have been actuated by the idea that there was much in common between the two regiments. The 7th is known in America as "the Millionaires' Regiment," and has been described by the Inspector-General of the United States as being composed of "doctors, lawyers, brokers, and many college men who have attained high rank in athletics and sports—a class of men valuable to the State and country in peace and war." This description cannot be said to be really applicable to the Queen's Westminsters, though they certainly numbered in their ranks many men of independent means.

Be that as it may, a friendship was established between the two regiments, and when in America,

Sir Howard Vincent was asked by Colonel Daniel Appleton, of the 7th, to hold an inspection. This he did on October 7th, 1904, and at a dinner given to him the same evening in the Armoury, he stated his wish to give a silver shield to be competed for by the two regiments "on any conditions that may be mutually arranged, provided they be the most sporting possible, and designed to bring out the qualities of the men rather than of the rifles."

Two contests were subsequently held as the outcome of this offer—one at Bisley and one at the Creedmore Range, New York, the home team winning on each occasion.

Sir Howard made much of the American team when they visited England, showed them all the sights, and persuaded Lord Roberts to present the shield to the winners at a banquet in the King's Hall, Holborn, just before the return of the 7th to New York. Needless to say, this hospitality was at least equalled when the Queen's Westminsters paid their return visit to America.

By way of concluding this account of Sir Howard Vincent as a Volunteer Commandant the following quotation is of much value :

"Vincent was not free from the particularist spirit which caused members of the various divisions of our land forces to judge the policy of every Secretary for War from the point of view of their own branch—Regular Army, Militia, Yeomanry, Volunteers. When we read his evidence given to the Royal Commission on the war in South Africa, it is obvious that he brought every new regulation to the test of the ques-

tion, "How will this act on a body working under the conditions imposed by the necessities of the case on us?" That is to say, on men who can practise only in their leisure, who can come together in large numbers with difficulty, and who are practically debarred from coming together wholly at one time. When pressed by the inquiry—whether a body subject to these limitations could be efficient as a whole, he was apt to take refuge in the plea that numbers of Volunteers did, in one way or another, serve in South Africa. This was a just defence of their spirit and patriotism, but it must be allowed to have been quite irrelevant to the question whether Volunteers as a whole could ever be a trustworthy element of a home defence army. He was too candid and too well-informed on his subject to deny that many of the regulations he protested against were intended to enforce valuable, even necessary, practice. He objected to them because it was not possible for a body composed of insurance, bank and law clerks, to comply with them. To that there was a formidable answer, men who could not find time to undergo necessary training could never form a trustworthy part of an army. They could only compose a fund out of which soldiers might be drawn in time, and recruits might come to an army in the field.

"When the reorganisation schemes of the Unionist Ministry had appeared, only to be rejected or to be lost in the sands, the way was clear for Mr. Haldane's reform. The new Minister for War, who must at least be allowed to have seen the problem, and to have seen it whole, secured much support from

Vincent by treating the Auxiliary Forces fairly. Vincent did indeed qualify his praise by saying that if it failed nothing would be left but to have recourse to compulsory service, and it is no doubt true that if all voluntary systems fail we must fall back on compulsion. When that day comes, if ever, we shall have before us such a puzzle as no other people have ever had to solve. He was too thoroughly a Volunteer at heart to be able to approve of conscription. And he disliked it on principle. He did not condemn it only because it was unnecessary for us, but held it to be a bad thing in itself. In the course of his evidence before the Royal Commission he declared in downright terms that universal compulsory service for two years was ruining the best of the youth of France."

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE PUBLIC TRUSTEE ACT

THE office of Public Trustee is probably the best and most lasting memorial of Sir Howard Vincent. He agitated for its formation for twenty years, and it is fortunately possible to give his own words, contained in an article in the *Empire Review*, for February, 1908, to describe the beginning of the struggle.

“The Public Trustee Bill was one of three measures introduced by me into the House of Commons on the day I took my seat in 1886, the other two being the Probation of First Offenders Bill and the Saving Life at Sea Bill. The two latter passed into law during the following year, but the Public Trustee Bill was longer in coming. Too many persons were interested in the old order of things to offer the Public Trustee a ready welcome, while it was highly profitable to the most compact and powerful of trade unions—that of the law. In vain the example of New Zealand was cited. What might be good for a new and sparsely-peopled country, in which trustees and executors were difficult to find, could not, it was alleged, apply to Great Britain, where they abounded.

"Notable frauds by trustees as well as misappropriations of trust funds were reported, but these matters left little or no impression on the House of Commons. A few delinquents were sent to penal servitude; a few more were suspended by the High Court from the practice of their profession on the application of the Incorporated Law Society, but the greater number escaped altogether. The persons defrauded were helpless widows or defenceless orphans. They had lost their money. They had none left wherewith to prosecute, no means of making their complaints heard. Yet the House of Commons was silent."

Two things are noticeable in this account as strongly characteristic of the writer. First of all there is the fact that he introduced three Bills on the very day he took his seat for the first time in the House of Commons! Sir Howard was never the victim of shyness, and he never lost time. Secondly, there is the motive. Kindheartedness prompted far more of Sir Howard's actions than was generally realised. It was the thought of the helpless, defrauded women and children that suggested to him a means of succouring them, and, moreover, caused him to persevere for twenty years until he had obtained for them the boon he sought.

The next events in the history of the measure occurred in 1888, when two Bills were brought in, one entitled "The Official Trustee," by Mr. Warmington, Mr. Haldane, and Mr. Bowen Rowlands, the other "The Public Trustee," again by Sir

Howard Vincent. In 1889 the two promoters joined forces, with the addition of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, and again brought in the Public Trustee Bill in the House of Commons, while in the same year the House of Lords actually passed a similar Bill introduced by Lord Halsbury. "But," said Sir Howard Vincent, "it is one thing for the Lords with their independence of electoral influence to pass valuable social legislation, and quite another thing to get it furthered in the House of Commons. There are a hundred parliamentary ways of killing a measure, the most effective being to get the party agents in the constituencies to send vehement protests to the Whips and party managers. This was done with impartial disregard of party politics, and the more readily as in nine cases out of ten the local agent of either party was a solicitor. The protests of local Law Societies also had their effect on members. It was impossible, therefore, to get the Lords' Bill set down in the House of Commons."

Many men would now have been dispirited and given the whole thing up, but that was not Sir Howard's way. He believed in his cause, and he believed in himself. So he worked away more persistently than ever, and the Public Trustee question was never allowed to drop out of sight. One result of this was that in 1891 the Bill became a Government measure, and was brought in by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr., afterwards Lord, Goschen). But even so its opponents were too strong, and no progress was made. In 1893 and 1894 Sir Howard again brought in the Public Trustee Bill, and in 1895

on his motion a Select Committee was appointed "to enquire into the liabilities to which persons are exposed under the present law as to the administration of trusts, and whether any further legislative provision might be made for securing adequate administration of trusts without the necessity of subjecting private trustees and executors to the risk they now run." Lord Loreburn, then Sir Robert Reid and Attorney-General, was appointed chairman. A number of important witnesses gave evidence, including Lord Halsbury (a former Lord Chancellor), and Lord Herschell (the Lord Chancellor at that time). The committee reported that "the evidence puts it beyond question that large sums of money are annually misappropriated by private trustees, and that much loss and consequent suffering are caused by this malversation, and that those who suffer are chiefly the poorer and more helpless"—a conclusion to which Sir Howard Vincent had come years before, and upon which he had been continually insisting.

It appeared to the committee that no extension of the criminal law would be sufficient to provide a remedy for the existing evils, and that it would be of immense benefit that those who desire to place their money in trust for others, or to have their money distributed at their death, or are beneficiaries under trusts, could know that there is a cheap method by which they can obtain administration of the trust fund with an absolute assurance of security. . . . The committee decided that a case had been made out in favour of the establishment of a system by which private trusts can be administered, if



so desired, by or under the control of some judicial or official authority. In other words, the committee recommended the appointment of an official trustee—the remedy which Sir Howard had originated and prescribed for so long. The immediate result of the Commission was the Judicial Trustees Act of 1896 based on the Scotch system. "But," says Mr. Stewart, the present public trustee, to whom the writer is indebted for much valuable information on this subject, "this has been adopted to a very small extent, owing, no doubt, to its rather cumbersome procedure, and to appointments being made only on application to the Court."

Nothing further seems to have been done until 1901, when Sir Howard again brought forward his Bill, which he this time called "For the Prevention of Fraud upon Widows and Orphans by the Appointment of a Public Trustee or Executor, and the Amendment of the Judicial Trustees Act."

Again he was doomed to failure, but such was his indomitable perseverance that he brought in the Bill in each of the four following years, 1901-5, and always with the same result!

It is necessary now to return to the words of Sir Howard himself, who gave in the *Empire Review* a graphic account of how at last—after twenty years—he found success.

"Happily the Bill was greatly helped by a few prominent cases of mistrust, and these were driven into the minds of members by such means as were possible. . . . Among its allies were two men of note, Sir Robert

Reid and Sir Edward Carson. Opposed to them were two scarcely less determined, Sir Henry Fowler and Sir Albert Rollit. 'Tout vient à celui qui sait attendre,' says the French proverb. It often proves true, though the 'attente' is not infrequently so prolonged as to make it 'trop tard.'

"In 1906 the Bill was mentioned in the King's Speech. Lord Loreburn ran it through the House of Lords, but again protests rained on the Whips, and with not less effect, because of the legal connection of the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury. 'It is a most unpopular Bill: it will do us a great deal of harm.' It is surprising what a power lies behind these words from a Chief Whip to a leader. But the gods were with us. When it seemed impossible to get the Bill put down, when the Session was all but finishing, when only three days more, fully bespoken, remained, a sudden break in the Government programme let in the light. It was Monday evening; Tuesday and Wednesday alone remained. The favourable word was, however, secured, and the Attorney-General (the late much-lamented Sir J. Lawson Walton) carried the Bill through second reading, committee and report, with extraordinary skill and the tactful suavity which endeared him to all. Not a few solicitors vainly exercised their ingenuity on the other side. The House was determined to have the Bill.

"Thus has the old mother-country secured after two decades a new institution which gives every promise of becoming exceedingly popular and supplying a long-felt want."





How accurate was this forecast of Sir Howard Vincent is seen by a glance at the Annual Reports issued by the Public Trustee. In the first Report, issued in 1909, Mr. Stewart states that in 1908, three hundred and twenty-five cases were accepted, the total value being £2,095,900.

The Public Trustee Office was in that first year able to carry on its duties with a staff consisting of the Public Trustee, two principal clerks, two shorthand typists, and a messenger. In the last Report, issued in 1912, the cases accepted during the previous year numbered no less than one thousand and fifty, of a total value of £8,626,315. The number of the staff can only be surmised from the fact that during the year fifty-one "additional" workers were engaged, while the letters written in the office amounted to 121,126.

If this rate of progress continues the business of the Public Trustee threatens to become overwhelming. The size to which it has already increased is a lasting tribute to the foresight, courage, and perseverance of Sir Howard Vincent.

The rest of the Session of 1896, which was the "half-way house" of the Public Trustee Bill, and the date of the first success obtained in its progress, was occupied, so far as Sir Howard was concerned, with continued advocacy of Fair Trade. Included in this policy was the promotion of a Bill to amend the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887, and of another to prevent the importation of foreign prison-made goods.

The former of these was justified by Sir Howard on the grounds that the Act of 1887 was constantly

evaded. Only the packages containing foreign-made goods were marked with the name of the country of manufacture. It followed that fraudulent persons were able to import a quantity of unmarked goods inside these packages and to sell them as British-made.

This was true enough. But when Sir Howard went on to contend that the fact that goods were less likely to sell if marked as of foreign origin, and that therefore the sale of British-made goods would be promoted, he did not show a very clear understanding of the mind of the ordinary British woman when she goes a-shopping. Anything that looks like a bargain is to her irresistible. The same may be said as to foreign meat. By far the larger number of purchasers must always belong to the class that has to consider anxiously the expenditure of every penny. The imported frozen meat from the Argentine will always command an immense sale on account of its cheapness, and will in consequence help to keep down the price of British meat. The fact that an article is made in Germany is nothing to her so long as the said article is cheap and serves her purpose. To some extent, indeed, the Merchandise Marks Act even helped to advertise foreign manufactures. As has been truly said, "By compelling a declaration of the country of origin a Merchandise Marks Act or a Prevention of Fraud Act did serve as an advertisement to our rivals. South Americans who had bought cutlery marked as English were forced to learn that it was made in Germany, or African and South American purchasers of poor cotton goods were taught that, though sold by Englishmen as English, they really

came from Spanish mills. The purchaser might, and there is evidence that he did, come to the conclusion that he would acquire the articles at a cheaper rate still if he bought from the true producer, for he would free himself from the necessity to pay middlemen's profits. To that extent the marking of goods may have been injurious to British trade."

Another objection brought against the Act was the curious one of the difficulty of marking small objects. Most characteristic was Sir Howard's method of meeting this. He came down to the House carrying a basket of marked eggs and biscuits to show the absurdity of his opponents' contention!

## CHAPTER XVIII

1895-1899

WHEN the Conservatives returned to power in 1895 no doubt the hopes of the member for Central Sheffield were high. At last there seemed some prospect of the advancement of some of the causes which he had at heart. Indeed, as has been seen, it was in the following year that he obtained the first success in the promotion of the Public Trustee Bill. But there were two circumstances which militated against him. In the first place the new Ministry was formed by a coalition of Conservatives, both Free and Fair Traders, Unionist Liberals, and Unionist Radicals. Under such auspices Tariff Reform, as it came to be called, Alien Immigration, and such like measures stood no chance of serious consideration, although the latter subject had been made prominent in the speeches of Unionist candidates all over the country.

In the second place Colonel Vincent fell ill on March 1st of that year and was confined to his bed for a fortnight, after which it was some time before he was pronounced well enough to go away with Lady Vincent to recruit. Owing to this it unfortunately happened that he was not in his place to utter the remonstrance which would surely have fallen from him



when Mr. Ritchie, who had succeeded Sir Michael Hicks-Beach as Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that the Registration tax on foreign corn was to be withdrawn. Only three years before, on April 14th, 1912, he had shouted, "Well done! Well done!" when the then Chancellor had proposed a duty of threepence a hundredweight on all corn and fivepence on all flour brought into the country. Used as the House of Commons was to his frequent exclamations, this one brought upon him a cartoon by "F.C.G." in the *Westminster Gazette*, in which he is depicted as a "Whohoopoe" sitting on a Protection bough!

But there was another way in which his hopes had been high. He had a remarkable record of services performed both for the State and for the Conservative Party. His successful administration at Scotland Yard, and his self-sacrificing work in raising the Queen's Westminster Volunteers to a state of unrivalled excellence and efficiency, were of themselves strong claims for some honourable notice. When to these are added the work he had done on behalf of the Empire Trade League and the National Union of Conservative Associations, over the deliberations of which he presided in the autumn of this very year, his claim upon the gratitude of the Conservative Party was strong indeed.

But he was a little before his time, and his persistence in bringing forward the causes in which he was interested—especially that of Fair Trade—was considered a little troublesome. So it was that on the publication of the New Year Honours of 1896 he merely received

a knighthood, a reward which some people—even if not the recipient—considered would have been more adequate had it been a baronetcy.

An extract from *Modern Society*, commenting upon the fact that there were now four Lady Vincents, adds : “It is curious that the husbands of three of these ladies should be brothers, and the other one, Maria Lady Vincent, their mother. Sir William Vincent is Sir Howard Vincent’s elder brother, and Sir Edgar Vincent his younger brother. These brothers were, or rather are, famous for their personal charms, and the success in life of Edgar and Howard is doubtless due to this fact, coupled of course with that of their real merit and ability.”

Sir Howard found himself towards the end of 1896 in need of some rest and change, and accompanied his brother Edgar on a trip to Constantinople. The following account has been written of their investigations of the Eastern question.

“If Sir Howard spent the end of 1896 and first days of the following year in Turkey, the reason was not only that he wished to enjoy a change. The Eastern Question, which for the moment was primarily the Armenian Question, was making loud demands on public attention, and Vincent always loved to be well informed on the spot. After his return at the end of January, 1897, he sent a memorandum to the Marquis of Salisbury.

“It is a very readable document, and states the elements of the embroglio in the Near East clearly. The writer could not say much that was new about a

subject which had been discoursed for generations. The deadlock of the Powers, and the corresponding deadlock between the Sultan's Christian subjects of different races in Europe who wished to liberate Macedonia, but on the condition that each of them kept it all to themselves, and who would always rather see the Turk in command than share power with their brother Christians of a different speech and shade of orthodoxy, had long been notorious facts. So, unfortunately, was the loss of British influence due to perpetual interference which encouraged Christian malcontents without going—or rather without having the means in the face of other Powers to go—to the length of putting effectual pressure on the Turks. Vincent, who found that loss of diplomatic influence in the East carries with it loss of commerce, drew an expostulation from Mr. Chamberlain by declaring that our only interest in the East was trade. It was too sweepingly said, and, as Mr. Chamberlain pointed out, had the fault that it seemed to put our position on what might be described as a sordid footing. Vincent's opinion that the sufferings of the Armenians had been exaggerated was perhaps too optimistic. At Constantinople, and under the eyes of European witnesses, they, no doubt, did enjoy some protection. To judge of their general treatment in the Empire, it would have been necessary to see them further East where they were subject to the brutality of the Khurds and to local fanaticism. It was characteristic of the whole Eastern difficulty that the religious chiefs of the oppressed Armenians were ready to affirm to Vincent that they after all preferred the alternate sloth

and violence of the Turk to the constant grinding of the orthodox Russian Tchinovniks over the border."

The year 1897 was, of course, chiefly noteworthy on account of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. This was a great occasion for Sir Howard, inasmuch as his beloved Queen's Westminsters kept the streets in Westminster just as they had done ten years before, and once more they justified his pride in their appearance and efficiency.

Sir Howard's wrathful excitement may perhaps be imagined when *The Army and Navy Gazette* came out with an adverse criticism on the fact that the regiment carried water-bottles and haversacks on the great occasion.

"What!" said he, "while journalists and legislators were feasting during the long wait that occurred, were the members of the guard of honour to let nothing pass their lips—at 'attention' much of the time, and with 'the Queen's sun' full on the back of their heads? Moreover, all troops out that day carried like provisions. Had they not, somebody would have been hung. It is too much when a military journal talks of haversacks and water-bottles being 'associated with Brighton picnics and Wimbledon pot-hunting.' The Queen's Westminsters can march and shoot with the best, but the comfort and well-being of the men has always been considered. This is both the letter and the spirit of the Queen's Regulations. They use the phrase with regard to guards of honour 'as a general rule.' That means variations according

to circumstances by proper authority, as in this case."

In the following autumn the National Union of Conservative Associations held its twenty-first meeting, and elected Sir Howard to the Council for the twelfth time, and for the third time at the top of the list. The record of successes which could be named on the occasion was not great, but chief among them was the Foreign Prison-made Goods Act, so that there was a special sense of gratification to Sir Howard in the passing of a measure for the sake of which he had submitted to much hard work and some ridicule in the comic papers.

The early part of the year 1898 was uneventful, the only incident worth mentioning being the invitation received by Sir Howard to serve on the British Commission for the forthcoming French Exhibition. He put his usual vigour and enthusiasm into this work, and was especially active in trying to persuade Sheffield manufacturers to send exhibits to Paris.

The close of the year 1898 was memorable from the fact that Sir Howard Vincent was appointed one of the British delegates to the Conference upon Anarchism, which had been convened at Rome by the Italian Government. Sir Howard had been sounded as to the probability of his being able to go, and on November 26 the late Lord Salisbury wrote asking him to do so. The letter stated that the other two delegates would be Sir Philip Currie, British Ambassador to Italy, and Sir Godfrey Lushington, and concluded: "You were some years back con-

nected with the Criminal Investigation Department, and held the office for several years. The subject therefore will not be new to you; and it is important to join a member of Parliament to the delegacy, as the resolutions of the Conference are likely to be discussed in the House of Commons. I hope therefore you will be able to go—and if so, that you will be able to start as soon as possible—as the Italian Government have unexpectedly hurried the meeting.”

But Sir Howard was at this time in the South of France, and the letter had to be forwarded to him there. However, he was one of those men who appear to be always ready packed for a journey anywhere, so he set off for Rome without waiting to send a reply to Lord Salisbury. The letter he eventually wrote was of all the greater interest from the fact that it was written nearly a week after his arrival.

“BRITISH EMBASSY, ROME,

“*December 8, 1898.*

“Dear Lord Salisbury,

“I have not had earlier opportunity of acknowledging the letter with which your lordship honoured me under date November 26, with regard to the Anti-Anarchist Conference at Rome.

“I immediately, upon receipt of the telegram from the Foreign Office respecting it of November 28, left Cannes for Rome.

. . . . .

“I reported myself to Sir Philip Currie on the

morning of December 2, Sir Godfrey Lushington having preceded me by a few hours.

"Nothing, however, was lost by the delay, but rather the contrary, as the fifty-three delegates, other than ourselves, had occupied themselves in endeavouring to arrive at a theoretical definition of the term 'anarchism,' in which the representatives of minor States, such as Monaco, Luxemburg, Servia, and Roumania made up in oratory what they lack in importance.

"The ambassador has already by telegraph, and will further in writing make official report to your Lordship of the proceedings and the action of the British delegation under his direction in conformity with your instructions.

"I may, however, say that nothing has taken place up to the present to which exception could possibly be taken in Parliament.

"Nothing of great importance will, I believe, result, save that the bringing together of several superior police authorities may lead to good understanding between them. Russia, Germany, and Austria came to Rome with a settled programme for combined action. But their resolutions have had to be greatly moderated and many withdrawn. In this I have been able to take an unofficial part, knowing the authors.

"The remarkable thing is the *éloignement* between the representatives of Russia and France, amounting almost to hostility. I have got together some remarkable facts as to the expulsion of persons from foreign states—mainly to England. Switzerland alone has sent us sixty-eight since the Austrian Empress's

murder, France, Germany, Italy and Belgium refusing them. It is not surprising that our police are alarmed at a state of affairs likely now to be worse.

“I am, my dear Lord,

“Your faithful servant,

“C. E. Howard Vincent.”

In the intervals between the sessions of the Conference Sir Howard determined to see something of the Papal as well as the Italian side of Rome. He was armed with a circular letter of introduction from Cardinal Manning, and wrote to Cardinal Rampolla by way of obtaining an interview with the Pope. This he was unable to accomplish, but Cardinal Rampolla wrote inviting him to come and see him at the Vatican. The interview proved most interesting, and Sir Howard left the following note of the conversation :

“Accordingly at 12.30 p.m. on Friday, December 16, 1898, I went to the Vatican, and up the three flights of marble stairs—each landing having a sentry of the Swiss Guard, who held his pike at the shoulder as a salute—to the apartments of Cardinal Rampolla, the Secretary of State.

“I was received almost immediately with great consideration, His Eminence coming out into the anteroom to conduct me with both hands to a place beside him on the sofa. He is a man of fifty-five years of age, of great stature, and of wide perception. For twelve years he has been Secretary of State of the Papal See, during which he has not left the Vatican



for a single day. With a Pope eighty-nine years of age that means that Cardinal Rampolla really governs the Roman Church. He speaks French with a strong Spanish accent, having learnt it probably when Nuncio in Madrid. He is a Sicilian, a man of large estate, and a man of dark complexion and showing little refinement of birth—better, I should think, in his vestments. He first talked of my godfather and Cardinal Vaughan, from both of whom I hold a letter under the seal of the Archdiocese of Westminster, ‘*Omnibus Ecclesiae Catholicae Archiepiscopis, Episcopis, Sacerdotibus et Fidelibus,*’ commending me as ‘*virum vobis carum, vereque probum.*’ With regard to the Anarchist Conference he attributed the growth of Anarchism to the lamentable deficiency of religious education, particularly in Italy, and instanced Lucheni, the Austrian Empress’s murderer, as having declared that he had never been taught the duty of going to church. His Eminence went on to say how gratified the Holy Father was by the assistance given by the present British Government to voluntary schools, i.e. to religious education and by the reported intention of furthering a Catholic University in Ireland. With regard to Parnellism, the Pope continued as opposed as ever, and thought Her Majesty’s Government had not responded sufficiently to his efforts.

. . . . .

“After keeping me half an hour and begging me several times to stay on, His Eminence took me by both hands, I walking backwards through the ante-

rooms, until at the last his Chamberlain took me over and conducted me to the lifts."

Probably no better selection could possibly have been made than that of the three British delegates. Sir Philip Currie had an exceedingly wide knowledge of foreign affairs, having been Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1882 to 1889, and Permanent Under-Secretary from 1889 to 1894. In all matters relating to foreign affairs there was, moreover, no one so deeply in the confidence of Lord Salisbury. Sir Godfrey Lushington had held exactly the same posts in the Foreign Office as Sir Philip Currie, while Sir Howard Vincent, with his experience as Director of the Criminal Investigation Department, and his unceasing interest in the question of Alien Immigration, may be said to have been a specialist in the matters as to which the Conference had been summoned.

But for all that no very striking results seem to have been obtained, with one important exception. There was no doubt a lull in the activities of the anarchists, and it is just possible that the attention called to them and to their doings may have had this result. At all events *The Times*, two years afterwards, at the time when a dastardly attempt was made to assassinate the Prince of Wales (King Edward VII) remarked that that was the first noteworthy anarchist outrage which had taken place since the Conference at Rome.

The Conference appointed a committee of sixteen chief officers of police, which sat in secret and presented no written report. But the members of the

Committee no doubt came to some sort of agreement for mutual action in the various European countries, by which a temporary immunity from outrage was secured. One curious point may be mentioned. The United States of America refused to send delegates to the Conference. Less than three years afterwards, on September 14, 1901, President McKinley was assassinated.

A formal letter of thanks from Lord Salisbury, dated January 21, 1899, reached the delegates through Sir Philip Currie, and six months afterwards Sir Howard received the following :

“FOREIGN OFFICE,

“*June 1, 1889.*

“Dear Sir Howard,

“I have great pleasure in informing you that the Queen has been pleased to confer upon you a Knight-Commandership of St. Michael and St. George in recognition of the valuable services you rendered in connection with the recent Anarchist Conference at Rome, which were, I need hardly add, highly appreciated by Her Majesty's Government.

“Believe me,

“Dear Sir Howard,

“Very truly yours,

“SALISBURY.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE BOER WAR

IT will be obvious to anyone who has realised the sort of man Sir Howard Vincent was that the outbreak of war in South Africa would be sure to stir him to the depths. A patriot above all things, he was impatient to help his country. A Volunteer commandant of unprecedented devotion and success, he longed to put his citizen soldiers to the test. A man, too, who had lived so much in the public eye, he was irresistibly attracted by the glamour of the theatre of war.

So it was that in August, 1899, he began to urge the Government to accept his offer to raise a body of a thousand sharpshooters for active service against the Boers. Patriotism was no doubt the primary motive of this offer, but there was also in his mind the fact that an excellent chance had arisen of showing that the Volunteers must be taken seriously.

But it was all in vain. Although his merits as a commanding officer were well known, there was such a strong conviction in the minds of most people at home that this little war with the Boers would be crushed out by a few regular troops in a few weeks, that his warning was ignored and his offer rejected.

It is, however, interesting, as showing how exactly he foresaw the necessities that would arise, to describe the plans upon which he meant to proceed—plans which, as has been truly said, “were actually carried out when the war was in full swing, in haste, and at a far greater cost.”

What, then, he proposed to do was to form a regiment of eight companies, each containing one hundred and thirty-two men, with buglers, signallers, cyclists, pioneers, stretcher-bearers, etc. The staff he meant to select from men who had had experience in the regular army. The men were to be taken from different corps, and “the identity of the regiment of origin of every individual was to be preserved as much as possible, especially if mentioned for special service or gallantry in action.” Married men were to be obliged to produce a certificate to show that their wives and children were not dependent upon them for support. Finally, the men were to spend a certain period of time in camp before being sent out to the seat of war.

This offer made by Sir Howard Vincent became widely known. Not unnaturally it was discussed by the Boers themselves, and Sir Howard received a remarkable letter signed “C.M.M. An Ignorant Boer,” and dated from Kaalplaats, Ottoshoop, on September 25, 1899. The writer was apparently a woman, and the letter was written in a bold hand and was excellently expressed. It was an appeal to the British to leave the Boers alone in the possession of their homes, and to allow them an independent nationality. Such passages as the following will illustrate the capacity of Sir

Howard's correspondent, and give an idea of the aspirations of the Boers.

"Is the supporting a thousand men to come and take the lives of simple hard-working people who have souls and hearts like you the best use to which you can put the money God has so mercifully given you? . . .

"Would it please you to have your one little ewe lamb taken from you and given to the rich stranger from whose brow the sweat has never run, and from whose flesh the blood has never dropped in guarding his one and only treasure? . . .

"You as a nation were not always as great and learned (if history respects truth) as you are to-day, and why should not we a nation also work our way up the ladder? . . .

"Here in our small but well-loved home my husband, although a poor man, provides for my six orphan brothers and sisters, but he is ready to defend his country when the time comes. Now, if one of your thousand sharp-shooters is to kill him, think of the anguish in a home which for the second time will be made fatherless through the use of a firearm."

There is a great deal more in the same strain. It is remarkable to find how apparently ignorant of the real position of affairs and of the relation between the British Government and the Boers, even fairly educated members of the latter nation must have been, if this letter is as ingenuous as it appears. No such appeal could, of course, influence Sir Howard in doing what he felt was urgent and right for his country. It

was his own Government and not any outside influence which caused the abandonment of his project.

It was partly the "provisional" nature of his proposed corps that brought about the rejection of Sir Howard's scheme, though he insisted that in our system there was always something "provisional" about the troops we sent to active service, except in certain cases such as the Guards. However, his offer was definitely declined, and so for the moment there seemed little chance that he would see anything of the war in South Africa.

This chance seemed sensibly diminished when Sir Howard was attacked with severe illness on the night of October 4. He and Lady Vincent had been dining out with a relative who was just starting for the war, who was "full of the breezy optimism" which infected all military people at that time and assured them that it "would be a walk-over."

On returning from this dinner Sir Howard had an attack of pain, which proved to be the beginning of a severe illness. His doctor told him that such serious symptoms of heart trouble would necessitate at least six months' complete rest. It will be imagined how such an idea horrified the active mind of the patient! He could not quietly submit to such a verdict, so appealed to Sir William Broadbent, but did not receive a less anxious account of his state, except that Sir William thought that by *the exercise of great care* he would be restored to health. The way in which Sir Howard exercised great care was most typical. He had a number of engagements, which included his annual address to his constituents at Sheffield, and most men

would under the circumstances have cancelled them all. But that was not his way. Although greatly weakened by the severity of his attack he carried out everything, and, says Lady Vincent, "went through the ordeal safely."

It was, all the same, a rather melancholy and depressing autumn. Sir Howard, owing to his firm refusal to lie up as an invalid, was over-worked and ill. His mother, to whom he was most tenderly attached, died on November 29, and this blow added to the strain. It was, therefore, none too soon that he left England with his family on December 10 to spend Christmas at Cannes and get that long deferred and much needed rest.

But it was not to be. No sooner were Sir Howard and Lady Vincent settled in than the papers were filled with accounts of the sad series of British reverses in South Africa and the exultant comments of some of our European friends.

A day or two later came the intelligence that a proposal had been made, and had received Government sanction, to form a body of Volunteers for the war under the title of the "City Imperial Volunteers."

Many men would have felt jealous that, after the offer to raise a corps of one thousand sharpshooters in London had so recently been refused, this new proposal should meet with immediate acceptance. Others, too, would probably have said that they were in too great need of rest and restoration to health to consent to take any share in the movement at least for a time. But Sir Howard was above all such considerations. Though at times he may have shown





THE VILLA FLORA. CANNES



himself to be jealous of what he considered the undeserved advancement of other men, his immense patriotism absolutely outweighed any feelings of the sort in the hour of his country's need. He might have hoped that, had he been in London, the command of the whole newly raised corps would have been entrusted to him, but when just before Christmas he received the offer of the command of either the infantry proper or the mounted infantry, he telegraphed his acceptance of either post, and started for home on Christmas Day.

By the time he arrived in London an arrangement had already been made that he should take charge of the mounted portion of the corps, but he urged that he had greater experience of infantry, and so it was settled that a change should be made and he should receive the command he desired.

Great excitement prevailed in Sheffield when the news came. The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* came out with prominent headlines :

“SIR HOWARD VINCENT FOR THE FRONT  
AN IMPORTANT COMMAND.”

Faithful as ever to his constituents, he found time to write to Mr. Bennett, Hon. Secretary for the Central Division Conservative and Constitutional Association of Sheffield, a long letter dated from the Carlton Club on December 28, 1899, in the course of which Sir Howard said that he was conscious of his primary duty to his constituency, and that he should be most reluctant to do anything that would prejudice its interests. He therefore desired that

the matter of his acceptance of the command offered him should be laid before the Executive Council of the Central Division.

He then proceeded to say : " Knowing the feeling of all its members, and indeed of the whole electorate, on a matter of national duty, I have ventured to respond affirmatively, in the meantime, to the invitation to render some, if small, service to the country in the hour of need.

" On the occasion of my annual meeting I mentioned that my offer of one thousand marksmen had not been accepted by the Government. But now the case is different, and under the leadership of the Lord Mayor of London a force of two divisions—one infantry, one mounted infantry—is being raised under the command of Colonel Mackinnon, for many years in the Guards and Chief staff officer in the Home District.

" There is one other matter I must add, and that is that if the Central Executive say, as I expect, ' You must go,' they will severally and collectively do all that is possible to preserve the interests of Central Sheffield during my enforced absence."

There is no doubt that Sheffield people of all shades of opinions were thoroughly gratified at the honour paid to Sir Howard Vincent. If proof be needed it is only necessary to quote from the *Sheffield Independent* of January 1, 1900.

" To Sir Howard Vincent I tender congratulations. It would have been gross unkindness on the part of

the authorities to have denied to Sir Howard the opportunity of proving the soundness of his military ardour. He is unquestionably one of the most experienced as well as prominent of the London Volunteer officers, and I am sure all Sheffield people, irrespective of party politics, will join in wishing him well. The fact of his appointment to the command of the infantry division of the Imperial Volunteers sent out from the City only reached Sheffield yesterday, and at once it was suggested that, if he has time before his departure to the front to visit the city, the occasion should be used to show him how, when a great national question is at issue, and he is taking the line of a true patriot, we are all in sympathy with him. At such a time Liberal and Tory divisions are dropped, and, without a dissentient voice we shall acclaim the soldier who makes his duty to his country his first care."

The above extract from a Liberal paper not only shows Sir Howard's personal popularity with all parties in his constituency, but is a striking example of the fact that it occasionally needs the severe discipline of a war to bring out the latent patriotism of those who in ordinary times appear ready to sacrifice the welfare of their country to party aims and a "Little Englander" programme. But alas! none of these projects were fated to come off, and the proposed public gathering to congratulate Sir Howard had to be abandoned in view of the fact that he was pronounced medically unfit for active service.

What a blow this was to Sir Howard personally can never be thoroughly understood. To go out to the war in such an important position was, to him, perhaps the one most desirable thing in the world. With his usual promptness and decision he had already made great preparations. Amongst other matters he had summoned a meeting of the Queen's Westminsters within a day or two of his return to London. They were bidden to assemble at 8.45 p.m. on December 29 in the Queen's Hall, and there he addressed them, taking them into his confidence and bidding them an affectionate farewell in his own inimitable manner. A scene of the wildest enthusiasm ensued, men upstanding, cheering vociferously, and singing, "For he's a jolly good fellow," "God save the Queen," and "Auld lang Syne."

With these cheers still ringing in his ears it must have been terribly hard to submit to the verdict of the two doctors who examined him, and who agreed that the state of his heart made it extremely dangerous for him to go on active service. This expert advice should not have been unexpected by him after his experience of the previous autumn, and it was, moreover, in accord with the opinion of his brother, Sir Edgar Vincent, whom he had met in Paris on his way home. But none the less it was a cruel disappointment.

Sir Howard, true to his policy of keeping his constituents informed of all that concerned himself, telegraphed at once to Mr. Bennett at Sheffield: "Have to bear grievous disappointment of medical rejection for active service."

A few hours later an incident occurred which was so entirely characteristic that it seems as if it could not have happened in relation to anyone else. A second telegram followed the first: "Failing to obtain non-concurrence with adverse medical opinion to satisfaction of authorities, I have settled to proceed on my own account to South Africa next Saturday on the *Carisbrooke Castle*."

Imagine the speed with which these various decisions were made and the rapidity of events! He did not leave Cannes till December 25; he made all preparations for taking over his command, and bade farewell to the Queen's Westminsters by the 29th. On January 2 he telegraphs the news of his medical rejection, and *the same day* sends another message announcing his immediate departure for the war! A Nottingham paper put the whole matter in a nutshell when it said: "Bon voyage to Sir Howard Vincent. It is impossible not to admire the spirit with which the gallant colonel, disappointed in the expectation of commanding the men he has helped to go to the front, resolutely undertakes the expedition as a private individual. Sir Howard has lost no time about it. It was only a few days ago that he was rejected by the medicos, and yesterday he sailed for South Africa. There was a muster of friends to see him off, and he was accompanied to Southampton by one of his brothers."

The voyage out appears to have done Sir Howard good, for he waited at Cape Town until the arrival of the City of London Imperial Volunteers, and in the course of a speech which he made to them he said

that owing to a piece of bad luck he was taken ill and could not take command, but he must say that if anyone wanted to get better he should get into the first ship and come out.

The day after making this speech Sir Howard started north, but he had failed to get any appointment. In a letter home dated from Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town, on January 29, 1900, he said :

“I arrived here last Tuesday after a wonderful voyage, and so much better that I at once begged Lord Roberts to let me do something. But there are such crowds of ‘golden youth’ here with like ambition that every post is full, and there are rows of candidates to fill it if it becomes vacant. . . . To-morrow night I go up to Modder River, where ten thousand men under Lord Methuen are face to face with Boer entrenchments twenty-six miles long.”

Perhaps the best and most concise accounts of Sir Howard's journeyings to see what he could of the war are contained in letters to Mr. Bennett. Perhaps the most interesting of these was written from Maritzburg on February 17, and contains the account of the one occasion on which Sir Howard was under fire :

“I arrived at Chieveley camp at 6 a.m. on Monday last. Half an hour afterwards I was in the saddle, accompanying my old regiment—the Royal Welsh Fusiliers—on a reconnaissance in force under Lord Dundonald. Seldom has one the privilege, after a break of twenty-seven years, to be thus again with the



regiment of one's youth in the field. They were the same as ever—the best and bravest of men. Contrary to expectation the objective point was not held by the enemy. He must have known the Royal Welsh were approaching. The Commander-in-Chief came up, ordered retirement, and invited me to gallop with him along the position. Hardly had the mounted infantry gone a quarter of a mile on the way home than the enemy appeared on the vacated hill and poured in a tremendous fusillade with ill result. They must have been hiding close by all the time.

“On the 14th the whole army returned. A glorious sight it presented in battle array. The Welsh Fusiliers led in the centre, and again I had the good fortune to be with them as bullet and shell greeted their arrival. It was then one realised that if you hear a bullet it has other billet. . . .

“I am now again on my way to the coast, again to go up country to see Lord Roberts' advance, and to see my C.I.V. in the field—terribly hurt at not being at their head, and all for no purpose. The hardships of the campaign are much exaggerated. Never has an army been so well fed, so well tented, so well doctored in a campaign. The works of the subsidiary departments are beyond all praise. Neither France nor Germany, neither Russia nor Austria, could approach it. But I will not enter into details. I have many. I have looked minutely here and there, according to the wish of my constituents. This, though, I reserve for my meeting with them in mid April, if all be well, unless, indeed, I find essential work to do here.”

The next letter, written on March 1, from the Central Hotel, Kimberley, mentions that he had been with his old regiment, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and Sir Redvers Buller before Ladysmith, and continues :

“On this, St. David’s Day, comes the news that the hard-pressed town is at length relieved. The good tidings arrived as I was having luncheon, with Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, with Mr. Cecil Rhodes at the Sanatorium, where he remained throughout the siege, encouraging all by his example, benefiting all by his large-hearted liberality.

“After leaving Natal I disembarked at East London, being hoisted over the side in a basket. Then I went to Sterkstroom to see General Sir William Gatacre’s column, and, driving from Queenstown to Cradock—ninety-six miles—with the same team in a day and a half, took train again for the north-west. After not a few difficulties, I followed Lord Roberts into the Orange Free State, heard how well the mounted infantry of the City Imperial Volunteers behaved at their baptism of fire at Jacobsdal, and, driving across the veldt in a cart with six mules, arrived at Paardeberg Camp just as the Canadians were making their magnificent charge hand-to-hand in the dark hours of the morning of Majuba Day. The howitzers saluted the anniversary, and as the sun broke the letter of surrender came in from General Cronje. At two o’clock the prisoners, upwards of five thousand in number, commenced their four-staged march to Modder River. Far as the eye could see





THE KRUGER HALF-SOVEREIGN

Given to Sir Howard Vincent by General Cronje,  
after his surrender at Paardeberg

ran the circle, eight and ten abreast, round the hill on which my mules were outspanning. That night I occupied the next tent to that of General Cronje and his staff in the head-quarters camp of the Guard's Brigade at Klip Drift."

In the course of a lecture delivered after his return home, Sir Howard gave his impression of the personality of this Boer general :

"I am bound to say I believe everyone here would pay that tribute to General Cronje which I paid to him—that of shaking hands with the brave general of a brave army—because the army under his orders had been brave. It had conducted one of the most magnificent rear-guard actions which had ever been fought, and it had encamped itself in a place, the character of which it is almost impossible to describe to you, in the bend of the Modder River. Within a very short time of the surrender I was in that Boer laager, and how human beings, to the number of four thousand, could possibly have existed there I shall never cease to marvel; but more especially is it remarkable to notice that they were hampered by the presence of over a hundred women and children.

. . . . .

"No finer sight could possibly have been seen, standing, as I was, upon that hill at Paardeberg, than the thousands upon thousands of Boer prisoners, nine and ten abreast, old men and boys, young men and youths, carrying every sort of impedimenta and looking the very reverse of agile and active soldiers. And

I am bound to say that, in spite of all this, the hostile general conducted himself with the greatest dignity. . . .

“After the surrender of General Cronje I exchanged with him an English florin for two pieces bearing Kruger’s head. I can’t bring to this meeting President Kruger’s head upon a charger, but I bring you Kruger’s head from the pocket of General Cronje!”

A few days after writing the letter from Kimberley Sir Howard started on his journey home. He left Capetown for St. Helena and England on the Union liner *Gaul*, on March 6, and arrived in this country by the end of the month.

## CHAPTER XX

1900-1901

ON his arrival in England Sir Howard Vincent proceeded straight to London, where he was met by Lord Wolseley, that great general who is reported to have said during the early mismanagement of the Boer War that he "spent his time trying to forget that he had been a soldier." Although passed over for the command, he proved his anxiety and eagerness to learn what was going on at the front by thus seeking an immediate interview with Sir Howard Vincent.

But he was not the only one. Lord Lansdowne wrote desiring to see Sir Howard as soon as possible, and much of the latter's time was spent during the early days of his return in consultation with the authorities at the War Office. He also gave a confidential address to the service members of the House of Commons, and a lecture, dealing with the strategic aspect of the campaign, at the United Service Institution. He also, of course, delivered an address of a more general and popular kind at Sheffield. In all his descriptions of the war he was especially anxious to bring home to the people in England the enormous difficulties of the campaign owing to the vast distances to be traversed and the great variety of the country.

He most graphically said that it was like sending two hundred thousand men from Calcutta to be landed at Marseilles, and then to be sent to fight at Hanover!

In one of the newspapers of that date a graphic description is given of Sir Howard's return to the House of Commons—how, bronzed, merry, laugh-some, and oh! so strong of lung, he greeted every acquaintance with—"My dear old chap, how are you?" He was back from South Africa moaning that he had not wielded a sword. "But, my dear boy, I saw the surrender of Cronje, and went everywhere—everywhere!"

The General Election of 1900 took up a good deal of Sir Howard's time. Not that he had to fight for his own seat, for he was returned unopposed; but some of his friends were not so fortunate, even during the wave of patriotic sentiment which the war had aroused, and he gladly gave his services to help them in their elections. It was then that *The Unionist Record*, 1895-1900, was published by the National Union of Conservative Associations, with a preface by Sir Howard, who was for years one of the most active members of the Council of the National Union, and as a member of its Literature Committee wrote innumerable leaflets in his well-known graphic style.

In this same year Sir Howard, undaunted by the rejection of his offer to the Government of August, 1899, actually proposed to Mr. Brodrick, then War Minister, to raise a corps of a thousand mounted infantry and to command them himself. He was, it is said, moved to do this by his knowledge that more men would be wanted and his feeling that the war



was losing popularity in the country. The answer to his proposal was a formal rejection: "The War Office, while cordially thanking you for your offer, state that at present the raising of separate battalions as distinct from drafts for the Imperial Yeomanry is not contemplated." This reply reached Sir Howard when he was at Cannes, whither he had gone towards the end of the year for rest and change.

On January 22, 1901, Queen Victoria died, and that sad event, together with the accession of King Edward VII, overshadowed all domestic events, while the war in South Africa continued to cast a gloom over the history of the nation. For all that, Sir Howard busied himself as actively as usual in promoting the various causes in which he was interested, and in the spring of the year was called upon to undertake an important task in Ireland.

The experience gained by Sir Howard Vincent during the time that he was in office at Scotland Yard was never forgotten either by himself or by others. For himself it appeared to stimulate his insatiable thirst for acquiring information. No matter whom he met, he always got something out of them. He would ask innumerable questions of everyone, whether they were chance fellow-passengers in a train, clerks who brought him papers to sign, or even the crossing-sweeper who looked, and never looked in vain, for Sir Howard's kindly greeting. It is said that in engaging a servant he would not be content until he had found out all about the people with whom the servant had previously lived, and, moreover, he would, by a series of careful questions carelessly put, turn his victim

inside out without giving any impression of what he was doing.

This gift was on more than one occasion utilised by those who had watched his career for purposes of public service. One of the chief of these occasions was when in 1901 a spirit of discontent as to pay and other matters arose in that fine body of men the Royal Irish Constabulary. Lord Cadogan, at that time Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, determined to appoint a small Commission of three to investigate their grievances, and on March 29, 1901, wrote to ask Sir Howard to accept the Chairmanship of the Commission, saying that it would be a great satisfaction to the Chief Secretary and to himself if a favourable reply were given to his request. He added that it was proposed that the other two gentlemen to be associated with him should be, one connected with the Treasury, and one Irishman conversant with the circumstances of the country and of the service concerned. Those ultimately appointed were Mr. R. W. A. Holmes, C.B., and Mr. R. F. Starkie, R.M.

It need hardly be said that Sir Howard, with his invariable readiness for work and his special interest in police affairs, consented to undertake the work, and for some months he was busy plying the witnesses who appeared before the Commission with searching questions. Four head constables, eight sergeants, and twenty-eight constables were examined, besides other witnesses, and a careful report was drawn up embodying a large number of recommendations, which pointed to the fact that the Constabulary were, to a considerable extent, justified in bringing their case to the notice of the

Lord-Lieutenant. This is obvious from the fact that the carrying into effect of the recommendations of the Commission entailed an addition to the Constabulary Vote of over £30,000 per annum.

As evidence of the thorough nature of the enquiry and the soundness of the advice of the Commission, it is only needful to say that practically all of the suggestions made were accepted and that the Royal Irish Constabulary were completely satisfied. Sir Howard Vincent received the following gratifying letter from the Right Hon. George Wyndham, at that time Chief Secretary for Ireland.

*Private.*

“CHIEF SECRETARY’S LODGE,

“PHENIX PARK,

“DUBLIN,

“10. 10. 01.

“My dear Howard Vincent,

“Let me congratulate you on, and thank you most warmly for, the successful achievement of a most difficult task. A unanimous report on such a complex subject is a ‘rare bird’ in these days, and reflects the highest credit on the skill of the marksman who brings it down.

“I am extremely obliged for your own draft report. Short of having it as *the* report, its confidential perusal will be of the greatest assistance.

“I envy you the enterprise on which you are setting out [a second visit to the seat of war in South Africa], and wish you good fortune with all my heart.

“Yours very sincerely,

“GEORGE WYNDHAM.”

It was during the time that he was occupied with this enquiry that Sir Howard received an honour from King Edward VII, which he greatly valued. On June 18, 1901, Sir Francis (now Lord) Knollys wrote from Sandringham to say that he was commanded by the King to say that it afforded His Majesty much pleasure to appoint Sir Howard to be one of his Volunteer A.D.C.'s.

Another matter of great interest to Sir Howard Vincent also occurred in June, when he was present to welcome home the survivors of the active service contingent of the Queen's Westminsters which had been serving with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the King's Royal Rifle Corps, from whose commanding officer, Colonel the Hon. E. J. Stuart-Wortley, they had received the highest praise.

With the exception of these and some few other less important interruptions, the Irish Constabulary enquiry occupied Sir Howard until October. No sooner was the work finished and the report sent in than he set out for his second visit to South Africa. His reasons for undertaking this expedition were plainly stated in his annual address to his constituents, delivered in Sheffield on October 1. He said :

"I never absent myself from this country, and from a position in which I am able to further your wishes, if it can possibly be avoided, without asking your support and your approval. But the state of affairs in South Africa, I think, demands some sacrifice on behalf of every single individual, not alone of such cash as they can spare, but also in personal service.

Therefore, with your approval, I should like to go next week to South Africa in order to study again the change in the situation, and to render until Parliament meets such help as Lord Kitchener may think I am capable of giving him. I have also another object in view. Upwards of 130 of the members of my regiment, the Queen's Westminster Volunteers, are still in the field, and I think it is the duty of the commander of every regiment to do all he possibly can to look after his men who are upon active service. . . .

"I need not say how pleased I shall be if I am able to further the interests of anyone in Sheffield in this matter."

This speech, reported in many papers, was taken hold of by the Radical Press as a splendid chance of pouring ridicule on a political opponent. *Truth* and the *Westminster Gazette* were specially virulent, the former publishing a clever poem, of which the last verse ran :

Buck up, then, we repeat, old friend !  
This War of yours must quickly end !  
This War to which, Oom Paul to bend,  
You've hosts of kith and kin sent—  
For though the saying known to you  
Is "*Amor omnia vincit*"—true,  
Mark this, old friend, the reading new  
Is—"Howard Omnia Vincent !"

The sneers were uncommonly cheap, and found their origin in minds either incapable of understanding or jealous of the existence of a loyalty and patriotism they did not possess.

Two days before sailing, i.e. on October 10, Sir Howard presided at a luncheon given by the Queen's Westminsters to those of their number who had been in active service in South Africa. Sir Redvers Buller, v.c., was one of the principal guests, and took the opportunity of making a long speech in reply to the various criticisms which had been made as to his conduct of the operations under his command in the campaign. This is not the place to review a controversy long since at rest, but it is interesting to note that Sir Redvers Buller's best known speech in his own defence was made under the chairmanship of Sir Howard Vincent.

On October 12 he left Southampton in the *Kinfauns Castle*. On arrival in South Africa he made an extended tour of the more disturbed portions of the country, seeking out and befriending men of the C.I.V. and any Sheffielders he could discover. He paid especial attention to the concentration camps of Boer women and children, as to which considerable interest had been excited in this country owing to the misrepresentations deliberately made by the Radical party in order to weaken the Government. As a matter of fact Sir Howard reported that "as to concentration camps the arrangements were exceptionally well made, and on the whole the contentment of the occupants was most marked. The children seemed perfectly happy, and the English education, elementary though it was, could not fail to be productive of great good. Under the circumstances adults also appeared well satisfied with their lot."

His reports upon this question, and also upon such

matters as the Army Post Office in South Africa, the Field Force Canteen, etc., all of which came in for warm commendation at his hands, were the really valuable results of this second visit to the Boer War.

On December 26 he left Cape Town in the *Braemar Castle*, homeward bound, and the passage was marked by no incident until they arrived off the Isle of Wight. The sea had been as calm as a mill-pond all the way, and it was owing to a slight fog, together with some mishap to the steering gear, that the liner went ashore in the very early hours of the 15th January in Gurnard Bay. When the weather cleared, between 4 and 5 a.m., it was found that the ship was hard and fast, and tugs had to come to take off the passengers and mails. Beyond the slight delay, no further inconvenience attended the accident.

Sir Howard must have been busy on the voyage. All the information he had so diligently been collecting was duly arranged so as to be used to the best advantage. A long letter to *The Times* appeared on January 18. It was dated from the *Braemar Castle* off Finisterre, and under the title of "In a Boer Concentration Camp" answered fully and overwhelmingly all the objections which had been raised to this method of dealing with the Boers. The letter began by expressing his surprise at finding in some of the English papers he received at Madeira renewed condemnation of the concentration camps, in spite of the fact that the Ladies' Committee of Inspection, presided over by Mrs. Fawcett, had not yet reported. He concluded by drawing a strong contrast between the thoughtful care used on behalf of the

friends of our enemies, and the treatment of loyal refugees "rudely carted over the frontier." "For them no public money, no political sympathy, no Opposition champion; only tattered tents, scraps of iron for shelter, no schools, no hospitals—anything good enough!" .

By the end of January—a fortnight after landing—an exhaustive address had been prepared by Sir Howard, and was delivered at the United Service Institution. Of the length of this effort an idea may be gained from the fact that it fills sixty-three closely printed pages.

With his usual readiness to lay his views before people in high places, and with a wish to remove any wrong impressions which he fancied might prevail in Germany, he sent a copy of this address to the Emperor William. Sir Howard received a letter thanking him for his thoughtfulness in sending the pamphlet, and saying that the Emperor would peruse it with pleasure, and was also much pleased to hear of the prosperity of the Queen's Westminster Volunteers, "whose inspection in 1891 His Majesty always remembers with pleasure."



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE ALIENS BILL, ETC.

THE next few years were passed in a somewhat monotonous agitation for various causes dear to Sir Howard Vincent's heart. Of these the chief was, of course, Tariff Reform. So much has been said upon this subject in earlier chapters that there is no need to enlarge upon it again. So far as Sir Howard Vincent was concerned, the chief difference in the circumstances was due to the conversion of Mr. Chamberlain to the cause. After that event Sir Howard naturally went more into the background, but he never ceased his labours or slackened in his enthusiasm for the cause. The Right Hon. C. B. Stuart-Wortley bears the following testimony on this point :

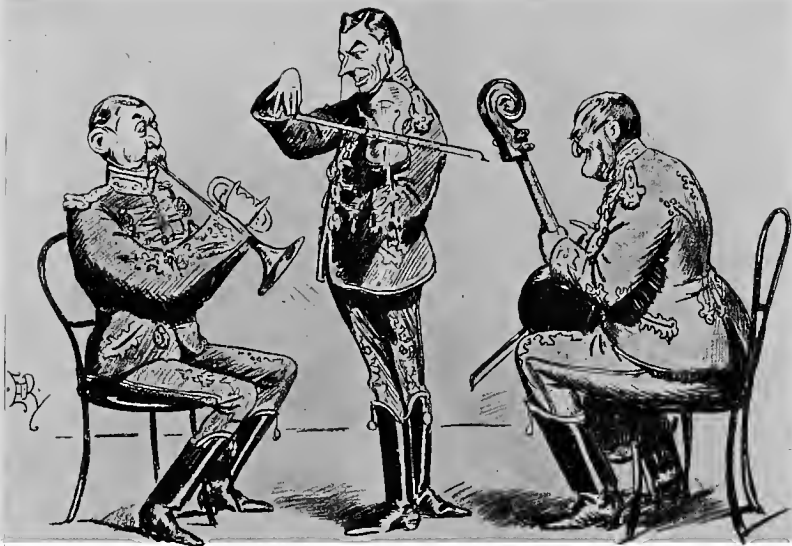
“ Most remarkable was the way he bore himself when in 1903 Mr. Chamberlain espoused the cause of Tariff Reform. As you know, Howard Vincent had advocated it since (and indeed before) his entry into Parliament in 1885. Most men would have been unbearable with their ‘I told you so,’ etc. But Howard Vincent was quite different from that ; he in no way thrust himself forward as having been of the real pioneers, but seemed content to remain quietly looking on as if

he had never been anything but an undistinguished combatant in an army whose fortunes he had always been ready to share. He continued indeed to address 'Empire Trade' meetings all over the kingdom to the last. I am not sure that that continued hard work did not hasten the sad end. But all the same, the reflected glory of Mr. Chamberlain's conversion seemed never to make Vincent in the least fussy or vain; on the contrary, he became more simple and quieter in his ways than before, and resembled rather a man who rejoices from pure love of his cause than he did the claimant of honours and rewards."

In the summer of 1904 it was he who promoted a meeting of Members of Parliament who desired to assist Mr. Chamberlain, but the resolution passed on the occasion was far too mild to please Sir Howard. However, a committee was appointed for consultative purposes and to organise action when necessary. It was perhaps a sign of Sir Howard's less prominent position in Tariff Reform matters that he was not appointed chairman of this committee, as he would have been almost certain to have been a few years earlier when he was the foremost champion of the Fair Trade cause.

In August he showed his continued activity by putting on the paper notice of a motion in favour of a registration duty for foreigners using the markets in Great Britain and Ireland.

But the matter of the Aliens Bill was almost equally near his heart, and some details of the work he had been doing to further its interests, especially since



MUSIC FOR THE COMMONS.—NO. I

THE PROTECTIONIST TRIO

Mr. Patrick O'Brien has suggested that efficient orchestras should be provided for the Dining-rooms and Terrace of the House of Commons in order to contribute to the general harmony among Members. Why not organise these orchestras among Members themselves?

*By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch," July 19, 1905*



1901, cannot be omitted from any account of Sir Howard Vincent's life and labours. It was, of course, a subject upon which, with his experience at Scotland Yard, he was a specialist. It was, moreover, a measure by which he was convinced that the British working-men would be greatly benefited, and in all his aspirations Sir Howard was largely influenced by a spirit of philanthropy.

So long ago as 1888 a Select Committee of the House of Commons had been appointed to report upon the subject, and of this committee Sir Howard was a member. The result of the deliberations was not altogether satisfactory to him, for the report acknowledged that while some immigrants crowded into such trades as tailoring in East London, the great majority only passed through this country on their way to America.

In 1901 the question was brought much to the front, and Sir Howard Vincent is found as Chairman of the "Parliamentary Pauper Immigration Committee." This committee consisted of fifty-two members, and included all the representatives of East London with one exception (Mr. S. M. Samuel). The opponents of the measure had made an attempt to get up a revolt amongst the Jews by declaring that the movement was Anti-Semitic. The *Jewish Chronicle*, however, quickly extinguished any such idea. The paper sent a representative to interview any members of the Committee who could be caught, and the following extract is taken from the number issued on August 2, 1901. "When it transpired that a representative of the *Jewish Chronicle* was waiting outside, I was

immediately invited to enter and cordially welcomed. Sir Howard Vincent, speaking for the meeting, greeted me with the words, 'I am very glad to see you here, because I wish to dispel any notion that this movement is tainted with an Anti-Semitic bias. There is not a trace of Anti-Semitism about it. On the contrary, we respect the Jews, we admire the part they have played in the war, and the action we are taking is as much in the interests of the Jews themselves as in those of any other section of the population.' "

In this same year Sir Howard put out one of his stirring pamphlets. It was headed :

**AN URGENT MATTER FOR THE UNIONIST PARTY**

*READ AND HAND TO A FRIEND OF THE BRITISH  
WORKING-MAN*

**THE ALIEN IMMIGRATION QUESTION**

BY

SIR HOWARD VINCENT, K.C.M.G., C.B.

A further publication consisted of the correspondence which had taken place between the Alien Immigration Committee and Lord Salisbury, at that time Prime Minister. In the course of a long letter the Committee urged that effect should be given to the pledges of the Administration to deal with the matter. The remedy they suggested was the passing of the first part of Lord Salisbury's own Bill, which he carried in the House of Lords in 1894. By this Act inspectors were to be allowed to board any vessel arriving at any port with immigrant passengers, to inspect such

passengers and to send back to their own country any alien who in the opinion of the inspector was either an idiot, insane, a pauper, a person likely to become a public charge, or one suffering from any dangerous contagious or infectious disease. The expense of such return of aliens to be recovered in a summary manner from the owner of the vessel in which they arrived.

The letter went on to say that if the evil were not remedied a movement of an Anti-Semitic character would be inevitable, and concluded by saying that the matter closely affected the Housing Question, for ' by over-crowding and inter-alien arrangements the native population in many parts of East London is being rapidly driven out in favour of the alien incomer.' In 1903 a Royal Commission on Alien Immigration was appointed, and early in May it summoned Sir Howard Vincent to give evidence. The following extracts (taken from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*) are of the greatest interest :

"The most important witness the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration had before them was Sir Howard Vincent. The Commission, over which Lord James of Hereford presided, sat at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

"Sir Howard said he had been M.P. for Central Sheffield since 1885. Previous to that he was Director of Criminal Investigation of the Metropolitan Police, and had had much under observation the condition and the proceedings of the foreign population of London. He was a member of the

Select Committee of the House of Commons on Alien Immigration in 1888-89, and entirely endorsed all the conclusions of that Select Committee. But he considered that the matter was then ripe for legislation, and that the probable increase in the alien flood rendered it necessary to organise regulating machinery in good time."

. . . . .

"Since 1889 the question of alien immigration had become every year more and more serious—not from the point of view of race or creed, but from the increasing numbers and the effect on the native population, 'in particular trades of particular localities,' that is in the tailoring, shoemaking and cabinet-making trades in the East End of London. He was convinced that unless regulatory legislation was speedily enacted the people would take the law into their own hands, and there would be an outburst of Anti-Semitic feeling—the consequences of which no one could foresee—not less violent than that in Russia."

. . . . .

"He was able to say positively from personal experience of seven years at Scotland Yard and close acquaintance with the police methods in every country in Europe, that the view of his successor, Sir Robert Anderson, for thirteen years Assistant Commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Department, as expressed in the *Nineteenth Century* for March, 'that the criminal alien invasion is a pestilent and pressing evil and danger, and that the foreign aliens



produce many of the most skilful and dangerous professional criminals,' was in no way exaggerated."

. . . . .

"He did not anticipate any difficulty in putting such an Act into operation, as Sir Robert Anderson, for thirteen years chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, said: 'These criminals are better known at Scotland Yard than are the King's Ministers. There would be no difficulty in putting our hands upon them. Further, the mere fact that their presence in the United Kingdom was contrary to law would act as a deterrent. The conclusion and deportation of criminal aliens should be part of a general system of immigration regulations. There should be an immigration department in the Local Government Board, or Board of Trade, preferably the former, the expenses thereof defrayed to a large extent by an admission toll.'"

. . . . .

It was a remarkable thing that the British workman did not appear to welcome the Aliens Bill so heartily as might have been expected. There were several causes that conduced to this attitude; sentimental regard for political refugees was certainly one factor, and it was known that Lord Salisbury had included political exiles in his Bill of 1894. Another factor was the sort of impression that obtained among workmen that the Bill was an attack by the richer classes upon the poorer. In fact, all sorts of false ideas were in the air, spread abroad for the most part by Radical opponents to the Government, who were

ready to sacrifice the interest of the working-classes if only they could discredit the Unionist party.

However, in 1894 the Bill was read a second time in the House of Commons, and was referred to the Grand Committee on Law, where it perished through Radical obstruction. Sir Howard's opinions on this event are given below from the columns of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*:

After the withdrawal of the Aliens Bill by the Government a *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* representative had an interview with Sir Howard Vincent at the House of Commons.

"After sitting six days," said Sir Howard, "so virulent was the opposition to it, that only three lines and the word 'and' had been passed. Upwards of two hundred and fifty amendments were down upon the paper, and if they had been debated at the same length, and in the same manner, it was calculated that upwards of five hundred days of continuous sitting would have been necessary for the passage of the Bill. In these circumstances, and having regard to the period of the Session, it was quite useless to expect the Grand Committee to sit day after day listening to endless speeches from those who were determined to talk it out at any price."

Sir Howard said that it was, of course, impossible to apply the closure in Grand Committee, or to limit the number of times an individual might speak. "For instance," said he, "the member who sits for Oldham, but does not represent the electors who have sent him

to Parliament, spoke six times within fifty minutes at the last sitting, including one speech of twenty minutes."

In the following year the Bill was brought up again with some slight alterations. On May 2 Sir Howard spoke at length in its favour. He concluded his speech as follows: "The increase of the criminal alien is of a most serious character. Last year as many as 4700 aliens were convicted in our criminal courts. The Honourable Member for the Isle of Wight [Major Seely], I understand, said it was the duty of a Christian country to offer hospitality to the afflicted; but surely it is the duty of a Christian country to look after its own people first of all, and to protect its own people from the unfair competition of foreigners, and above all it is the duty of this House and of the Government to protect their own people from contamination with loathsome diseases, from which many of the aliens unfortunately suffer."

This time the Bill became law, but it was a little too late. The Conservative Government was already moribund, and it is a matter of common knowledge that Radical Home Secretaries, by a remarkable failure to understand their responsibility with regard to an Act of Parliament, have succeeded in making the Act practically inoperative.

But one or two things occurred in this same year (1905) which to some extent diverted Sir Howard's attention from any disappointment he may have felt at the fact that the Aliens Bill was passed in a less satisfactory form than he had hoped. There was, in the first place, his further disappointment that he was

unable, owing to the "blocking" by one single member, to get a Bill passed for the establishment of Children's Courts—a measure which he was then pushing with all his energy. It was, as has been said before, a scheme which appealed strongly to his kindly disposition, and his experience gained at Scotland Yard gave him an intense interest in the children of the more dangerous classes.

Then his attention was attracted in April by Mr. Lucien Wolff's attack on Russian credit. Sir Howard's natural impulse was invariably to see the best side of any question that concerned a foreign country. On this occasion he was not satisfied without personal investigation. He went off to Russia to report on the "reserve" on behalf of certain Sheffield manufacturers. The conclusions to which he arrived were all in favour of the reality of the "reserve," and were set out in a letter to *The Times*. Later on he wrote at greater length to *The Spectator*, summing up impressions as follows :

"I will conclude, as I began, with a caveat against prophecy. But having a thirty years' knowledge of Russia, having seen within the past fourteen days nearly every one, Russian or foreign, able to throw light on the situation in Russia, I come to the clear opinion that with reasonable common sense and promptitude on the part of the authorities to meet what His Majesty happily terms 'the new conditions of existence,' there will be no revolution, no violent upheaval, but that the Russian people, perhaps more good-natured, more easily led, more disciplined, and

more under the influence of religious rites and ceremonies than any other race, will work out their salvation under the paternal system of government which they best understand."

It was a bold prophecy to make in May, 1905, but time has shown that Sir Howard was right.

In the latter part of the year he again suffered from one of his periodical lapses into bad health, the attack being sufficiently severe to compel him for the first time to give up his annual address to his constituents. He went to the South of France, but almost immediately there came the news of Mr. Balfour's resignation. "As usual," wrote Sir Howard, "when anything important takes place, we were at Cannes, and had to come home for the General Election, spending Christmas in Paris."

It was his sixth and last General Election, and a determined effort was made by the Sheffield Radicals to oust him from his seat. They put forward a Mr. Udale, Secretary of the Free Trade Union, and supported, as Sir Howard said in a letter to *The Times*, "by all its gold (foreign and other)." Notwithstanding this, and in spite of the fact that owing to Sir Howard's ill-health his opponent had a month's start of him, the Conservatives played a bold game. They allowed the Free Traders to exhaust themselves by much speechifying and bluster, and then Sir Howard, when (to use his own words) the enemy were "pumped out and speechless," came on the scene, and "found the people delighted to hear him." It only remains to be said that he was returned by a majority of 927 as compared with 856 at the last

election—a small increase but a splendid triumph in the middle of the great Unionist disaster of 1906.

There were several causes which contributed to this result. It was the well-known "Chinese labour" election, and the shrewd Sheffield men were not so easily gulled as the electors in many other places. Sir Howard, writing on this point to *The Morning Post*, said: "You are doing well in calling attention to the outrageous electoral tricks perpetrated by the Radical Party with regard to Chinese labour in the Transvaal. I can speak the more judicially as the working-men of Central Sheffield saw through them at once, and that the object was to close the improving demand in South Africa for mining machinery and other Sheffield products."

But there was probably a better reason still for Sir Howard's victory. The people of Sheffield are business people before all things, and having got hold of a good thing are not easily persuaded to let it go. They had many years' experience of the sort of member they possessed; they knew how he put their interests, private and public, before everything, and they were not going to part with him for a Mr. Udale or anyone else!

The remaining years—or it might be better to say months—of Sir Howard Vincent's career provided little of any great import. He went with a team of the Queen's Westminsters to pay a return visit to the Canadian volunteers. He met with a warm reception and vast hospitalities in that country, but in spite of the festivities, which were the prevailing note of the occasion, he found time to make considerable

investigations as to fiscal matters, thereby arming himself for future attacks upon the Free Trade Government then in power at home.

In the House of Commons he was, on his return, unwearied in asking questions and harrying ministers on many subjects. He agitated for a stricter application of the Trades Marks Act, but was met by much opposition even from Sheffield.

Perhaps the most characteristic, as well as one of the last subjects which he took up, was the matter of National Flag. He asked Mr. Birrell, at that time at the Education Office, whether he was aware that in France and in the United States patriotism was inculcated by the compulsory display of the national colours, and whether he would enforce the hoisting of the Union Jack "bearing the crosses of St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick," on all schools. The answer he received was typical of Mr. Birrell's usual satirical shuffle, and suggested that the flick of Mr. Redmond's whip was already sounding in the ears of the ministry. Mr. Birrell did not think that the patriotism of England and Wales needed to be manufactured by any particular ritual of flag-waving!

Sir Howard published in the following autumn a short pamphlet describing the ceremony practised in American Elementary Schools, and praised it as "tending to make men and women proud of themselves and proud of their country."

With this patriotic thought, the account of Sir Howard Vincent's active political life may well be closed.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE FRIEND OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES

ONE of the remarkable things in the life of Sir Howard Vincent was the fact that while so deeply occupied with political and patriotic work at home, he was able to give so large a share of his attention and, it may be added, of his affection to foreign countries.

It began when he was a boy. Mr. Jeyes has told how in his early days he was taken by his tutor, Mr. Washam, to France and Germany, where he gained such proficiency in the languages of those countries as to enable him to obtain a fairly high place in the examination for admission to Sandhurst. From this time his great proficiency in languages began. Confined at first to French and German, he ultimately included Spanish, Italian, and Russian. In this connection it is interesting to find in one of Sir Howard's big scrap-books two circular letters, one written by Lord Granville in 1871 and addressed to all British Consuls in Russia, the other by Lord Derby in 1871 to all British Consuls in the Ottoman Empire. Each letter recommended Howard Vincent to the recipients of the letter as one who was visiting Russia and Turkey respectively in order to learn the languages. He used to say that after three months' residence in



any country he would undertake to converse fluently in its language, but that he would not waste time over acquiring the correct accent. This he certainly never did—not even in French, which he could speak and write as easily as English, and with as much idiom as a Frenchman, but with an accent which left much to be desired. M. Coquelin, the actor, was once sitting next to Lady Vincent at luncheon, and perceived that she was nervous of speaking to him in his own language, of which she knew considerably less than did Sir Howard. To reassure her, M. Coquelin said: “My dear lady, you speak French *so much* better than your husband, for he has such a shocking bad accent!”—a criticism at which Sir Howard laughed as much as anyone. In spite of his bad pronunciation, his knowledge of the language was vast, including all manner of technical and scientific terms which many French scholars would not know.

The study of modern languages always appeared to Sir Howard of first importance. Realising how greatly he had personally profited, he was never tired of urging others to make them an essential portion of any scheme of education. For the army and navy he, of course, considered them the chief necessities. His views are tersely expressed in an article he contributed to the *United Services Gazette* in 1890, from which the following passages are taken :

“There was a time, not far distant, when the study of languages was little cultivated in the British army. Officers obtained their commissions after dreary

drudgery in Greek and Latin at the public school and the University. Even at the Royal Military College or at Woolwich the most desultory attention was given to living tongues. The French masters had but small control over their pupils, and instilled but little knowledge into their minds. The German classes were little patronised, and the authorities were indifferent. As to Russian, or Turkish, or Modern Greek, or Italian, or Spanish, or Dutch, or Persian, the idea never entered the head of the Council of Military Education to encourage their acquisition."

"Now a change has come over the state of affairs. Leave is readily given for the study of a language. It is sufficiently prolonged to enable it to be acquired. There is pecuniary and official encouragement. The advantage is greater, and in many eventualities it will be richly reaped by the country."

"But what I would urge upon subaltern officers of the army is this: Seize greedily every opportunity of acquiring language; it is the most attractive, the most remunerative study, it repays a thousandfold in the enjoyment of travel, in the pursuit of military science. The officer who acquires languages is bound to go ahead. But it cannot be done with ease over thirty years of age. Therefore it is the subaltern officers who should be especially active to take advantage of the facilities available."

But it was not only in foreign languages that Sir Howard interested himself. He was continually

visiting European countries and acquainting himself with their politics, their armies, their progress. He adapted himself with ease to the customs and modes of thought of whatever country he visited, and was almost invariably impressed with the friendliness which he considered was ready to be shown towards England. How far this was merely the result of his own acceptable personality it is hard to say, but many examples of this optimism can be found. Perhaps the year 1898 provides as excellent a proof as any. Early in October of that year he returned to England after one of his typical tours. It began with the Coronation of the Queen of Holland, after which it included portions of Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Poland, and Germany. But the visit to Russia was the most important. He brought back an impression that the fear of war with Russia which was in the minds of many Englishmen at that time was unfounded, and he wrote and spoke freely with a view to converting this country to his views. In the course of a published speech he said :

“I repeat—there is good business to be done in Russia in the near future, and this, more than aught else, is the assurance for peace. If Russia goes to war now, if Russia provokes a war, that industrial and commercial development which is brightly dawning will pass at once to darkest night. It matters not what the issue of a war. Russia cannot now—cannot for years to come—engage in a struggle with England without sacrificing her future. I have been able to draw my information from many channels, and I am persuaded of this, that the Russian of common sense

desires no other than a peaceful issue of pending questions. It is noteworthy that the point of ambition has been largely transferred from Constantinople to Central Asia and the Far East. Fate has made it so. The overthrow of China by Japan—four hundred millions who were unready by thirty who were ready—enlarged the vision. For Russia, though, the base is not the sea, as in the case of Britain, but a poor country at the end of an ill-watered desert line of communication.

“There is no serious feeling in Russia against England. We are not popular; the successful are never so. We are envied, but we are respected, and if the activity of ‘The Angli-chauka’—or English woman, that is, the queen—has been carried reproachfully home by many a Russian soldier, the Russian is none the less ready to do business with those whose probity is for him a byword. English literature, the latest books and magazines, as well as the standard authors, cover the tables of the educated, while extracts from English newspapers fill the Press.”

In this same year he wrote to *The Times*, assuring the English public that the feeling in France towards Englishmen was free from any individual or race animosity. He said: “I have a pretty wide experience as a foreigner in foreign lands. I have never known or heard of a foreigner meeting with aught but the greatest civility and even most eager desire to help and be useful, if he conforms to local manners and customs as his duty, taking things as they come,

good-naturedly. This is not less so in France to-day than in England. From the channel to the Mediterranean, Englishmen, Englishwomen, and English children will be as welcome now as at any time."

Then again, it must be remembered how anxious Sir Howard was to remove the bad feeling caused at the time of the Boer War between Germany and England, and how he sent a report of the true state of affairs in South Africa to the Emperor William in order to remove any false impressions that potentate might be nourishing. In fact it is no exaggeration to say that he did what he could to promote the peace of Europe.

His endeavours in this direction were better realised in foreign countries than in his own land. France especially held him in considerable estimation. Monsieur Lépine, the Chief of the Police in Paris, more than once called the attention of the French Government to Sir Howard Vincent as one who deserved some special sign of the goodwill of the Republic. In September, 1905, the President, at the request of the French Foreign Minister, gave him the Cross of the Legion of Honour—a distinction Sir Howard greatly valued. One of his friends, writing to congratulate him, put the matter in its true light. "Let me," he said, "offer my hearty congratulations on the well-deserved honour bestowed upon you by the French President. After His Majesty, I do not believe anyone has done more to bring about the 'entente' than yourself."

The mention of Sir Howard Vincent's affection for

foreign countries brings to mind his friendship with one particular illustrious foreigner — a friendship formed in Sir Howard's own country, and one which he prized most highly. This was the friendship so continuously extended to him by the Empress Eugénie.

It began in the early days when Sir Howard was at Scotland Yard. He had made the acquaintance of the Prince Imperial, and the Prince appeared to take a great fancy to Sir Howard, fencing with him, dining with him, and often asking him down to Camden Place. After the Prince's tragic death the Empress continued to honour Sir Howard with her friendship proving herself in this as in every way extremely faithful to the memory of her beloved son.

M. Pietri used to write and "command" Sir Howard to Farnborough Hill some two or three times a year. Her Majesty used to like to discuss business matters and politics with him on these occasions.

The Empress always unbent in the kindest fashion and talked freely to Sir Howard and Lady Vincent. Perhaps nothing will show this better than to quote Sir Howard's own description of a visit to Cap Martin in 1894. It may be mentioned in passing that he never came away from an interview with the Empress without speaking with wonder of the keen interest and command of information possessed by Her Majesty on every subject, and of her great grasp of European politics. Of this particular visit he wrote :

"I had luncheon with Her Majesty, only Madame le Breton and another lady being present. The Empress was most cordial and charming, and was delighted with my account of Brazil and the Argentine, in both of which countries she has large investments. The Empress talked much of past history. I never before heard her mention the war of 1870. She enquired about the statue of Columbus which she had sent out to the Isthmus of Panama, 'avant les événements de 1870,' and enquired as to its position, being much pleased at my description of it, and hearing that it occupied such a prominent place at Colon."

It was, it must be supposed, mainly because of Sir Howard Vincent's cosmopolitanism that he was in 1901 appointed a member of the International Committee of the Olympic Games. It was certainly not by reason of any athletic proficiency, for he had never cared for any outdoor sports except riding. In other respects he was the very man. He understood the ways of people of other nationalities better than any other Englishman of note of his day, and the fact that he was a Member of Parliament and a "Sir" appealed to the representatives of other countries. Needless to say, he became a most popular member of the Committee, to which fact witness was borne after his death by an article in the *Revue Olympique*, a number being published with a deep black border out of respect to his memory. The passage quoted below gives such an excellent idea of the impression he made upon members of other nations that nothing more fitting could be

found to close this chapter upon Sir Howard's friendly foreign relations.

“Ce qui nous importe plus spécialement, c'est de fixer son rôle dans le mouvement d'adhésion de l'Angleterre à la renaissance olympique. Ce rôle fut très considérable, décisif même par l'opportunité avec lequel il s'exerça.

“Les Anglais, comme on le sait, n'avaient pas vu tout d'abord avec beaucoup de satisfaction le rétablissement des Jeux Olympiques et l'internationalisme sportif, à son aurore semblait les choquer plus qu'il ne les intéressait. L'un des premiers à réagir contre cette tendance fut Sir Howard Vincent. Il devint un des membres les plus actifs du Comité International. En 1904 Londres fut choisi comme siège de la session annuelle car Saint-Louis, encore que Jeux Olympiques s'y célébrent cette même année, était trop éloigné pour permettre à beaucoup de membres du Comité de s'y rendre. La session de Londres réussit de tous points. Sir Howard et M. Laffan s'y dépensèrent sans compter et, à dater de ce moment, on put considérer la partie comme gagnée. L'année suivante, tous deux jetaient de concert les bases de la British Olympic Association dont Lord Desborough est aujourd'hui le zélé président. En 1905 au congrès de Bruxelles, en 1906 à La Haye, Sir Howard, toujours présent, apportait aux débats et aux discussions cette facilité de compréhension, cette ingéniosité à solutionner les difficultés qui, partout, rendaient si précieux son concours. Il y apportait davantage encore : son esprit et son cœur. Spirituel,



il l'était infuriment, et les menaces de la maladie cardiaque qui l'a emporté, et dont il savait le danger éventuel, n'avaient rien enlevé à sa gaieté non plus d'ailleurs qu'à son courage."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### LAST DAYS

**I**T will have been seen from the foregoing pages that Sir Howard Vincent had had many warnings that he was by no means constitutionally a strong man. A cough that had troubled him from his earliest days, and more than one symptom of serious heart trouble in middle and later life, must have convinced him of this whenever he would pause to consider such things. But his untiring activity and optimism prevented him from thinking much about the state of his own health, and the fact of his recovery of strength from time to time gave him a confidence that was scarcely justified. This was perhaps just as well. His love of life and all its activities was so great and there was always so much yet to be accomplished, that he could not endure the thought of leaving it all for the unknown. It was, then, a matter for thankfulness that, in spite of all that he suffered from time to time, he was ever hopeful and ever ready to be absorbed in whatever work came to his hand. But he had to be convinced at last of the seriousness of his state, though, fortunately, not until towards the last months of his life.

At the end of November, 1907, Sir Howard and Lady Vincent went out to the Villa Flora, Cannes,



MISS VERA VINCENT



for a month's rest before the marriage of their daughter to Mr. Bernard Hutton Croft, Grenadier Guards, of Aldborough, Hull. He was perfectly well while there, and as usual greatly enjoyed himself. He always loved Cannes and the Villa and the sunshine and the French people. His daughter had never liked the place, so that during this visit he and Lady Vincent more than once said how nice it would be to be able after their daughter's marriage to be there much longer and more often. But this was not to be.

Lady Vincent came back to England for Christmas, but Sir Howard stayed at Cannes until January 3, some three or four weeks before the wedding. The change of climate from the warmth of the South of France gave him a chill, and his cough returned with some violence. He was very unwell for a short time, but recovered—or appeared to do so—before the wedding. He enjoyed the festivities and entered into everything with his usual whole-heartedness. It had, however, been plain to those who knew him best that he was not quite himself, and immediately all was over he went to bed, apparently completely tired out. He did not seem to improve, though his doctor did not think there was anything much the matter. Still, it was thought that he had better go to a warm climate for a change, so he went with Lady Vincent to Bournemouth for a fortnight. This, unfortunately, seemed to do him little good. He still coughed and was obviously tired, though he went about more or less as usual.

On March 5 he and Lady Vincent went to Sheffield for a big entertainment which they gave to

his constituents, who had presented Mr. and Mrs. Hutton Croft on their marriage with a number of handsome articles of silver plate. He also delivered his last public address to the Conservative Association of Central Sheffield, dwelling upon the fact that at last the Unionist Party had adopted Tariff Reform as the main plank in their programme, a matter specially gratifying to himself, as he had been urging this policy upon them for twenty years.

All this rather trying visit he got through excellently, though not perhaps with the same vigorous enjoyment as of old. The excitement and the need for effort probably kept him up, for as soon as all was over and he had returned to London he suddenly seemed to get much worse.

Dr. Lyne Stevens was sent for, and he declared after due examination that he found decided symptoms of serious disease. This frightened Sir Howard, and greatly depressed him. It is not too much to say that from that moment he gave up the struggle, and he suddenly seemed to be worn out. The doctor recommended him to avoid the cold and damp of an English winter, so he went first of all to Bordighera, and, when the cold drove him from there, he went on to the Hôtel des Anglais at Mentone. This move appeared at first to be successful, but then he somehow got a fresh chill and became seriously ill with violent pain and sleeplessness. He became more and more depressed, and took no interest in anything, declaring from time to time that he was "done for."

On April 6 he had a very bad night, and early

on the morning of the 7th he sank into unconsciousness, and the end came quickly and painlessly.

Sir Howard left directions in his will that if he died at or near Cannes he was to be buried in his father's grave in the Protestant cemetery there, and this was duly carried out. A further memorandum was afterwards discovered, expressing his wish that he should be buried in his uniform of the Queen's Westminster Volunteers, but there was not time to have the uniform sent over from England. In this same memorandum he said that if he died in England he should like to be buried at Sheffield amongst the constituents whom he had served so faithfully for twenty-two years.

The cemetery at Cannes in which he was laid to rest was one of the things in which Sir Howard Vincent had taken an immense interest. His mother, Lady Vincent, had been Warden of the cemetery for many years, and he succeeded her in the office. The place was most beautifully kept, and once each winter when he was there he used to ask the Mayor of Cannes and all the principal Protestant clergy to come to the cemetery and inspect it. This interested and kept on good terms the Roman Catholic town authorities, who might otherwise have looked with no very favourable eye on this Protestant institution. The four churches belonging to the Church of England were on these occasions represented by their clergy, the Swiss by their pastor, the Presbyterians by their minister, and the Russian community by their priest. All these met together in a common interest, and it was just an illustration of the tactful way in which Sir

Howard was able to get people to meet and work together.

The cemetery is high above the town, and the views overlooking the mountains are lovely. The place is like a flower garden, and it is a happy thought that Sir Howard Vincent should rest in such a lovely spot, and one of which he was so fond.

During his last visit to Cannes, three or four months before his death, he had been full of a project for trying to reduce the inordinate expense of Protestant funerals there. The charges were exorbitant, amounting to £150 for quite a simple funeral, and Sir Howard sent for the chief undertaker to come and see him at the Villa, when he went into all the details with him, trying to persuade him to cut down many unnecessary things which were repugnant to English ideas. He succeeded in reducing the expenses very largely, and he had a paper of instructions issued to all the clergy on the subject. He also, by request of the manager of the *Pompes Funèbres*, ordered a funeral car sent out from England, so that the French hearse need no longer be used. This was done. This car was first used on the occasion of Sir Howard's own funeral.

No sooner was the news of Sir Howard Vincent's death known than telegrams began to arrive in shoals. Among the earliest to arrive was one from King Edward, who was at Biarritz, from which same place came a sympathetic message from Mr. Asquith. The Lord Mayor of Sheffield, the Chairmen of the Sheffield Conservative Association and of the Central Association, the Chairman of the National Union, the Mayor of Cannes, and numbers of other prominent people



and personal friends also telegraphed their expressions of grief and sympathy to Lady Vincent.

Then there came the letters—each post bringing a large budget—filled with such warm appreciation of the friend whom the writers had lost that their contents helped so far as was possible to brighten the darkness of those first sad days. The following letter from Sir Arthur Bigge, expressing the sympathy of King George V, will be read with interest :

“ MARLBOROUGH HOUSE,  
“ PALL MALL, S.W.,  
“ *April 14th*, 1908.

“ Dear Lady Vincent,

“ The Prince of Wales desires me to convey to you the expression of his sincere sympathy in the grievous loss you have experienced.

“ His Royal Highness, as Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, fully realises how valuable and energetic a friend that Regiment has lost in Sir Howard, who took so much trouble about the annual dinner and the charities of the Regiment.

“ Also, as President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Prince knows of the good work he rendered on the Council of that Society. His Royal Highness trusts that your health has not suffered under your heavy bereavement.

“ Believe me,

“ Yours very truly,

“ ARTHUR BIGGE.”

Memorial Services were held at Sheffield Parish Church (which was crowded on the occasion) and at

St. Margaret's, Westminster. The latter service was conducted by the Dean of Westminster and Canon Henson. A very large congregation was present, the King being represented by Colonel Ernest Villiers, A.D.C. A large contingent of the officers and men—from Colonel Trollope downwards—of the old Queen's Westminsters attended, and it is rather pathetic to notice that this was probably the first public occasion on which the regiment appeared under their new title of 16th Battalion of the County of London Regiment. The corps also attended the service at Westminster Abbey on the following Sunday morning, when the preacher (Rev. H. Bury) alluded in warm terms to the life and example of Sir Howard Vincent.

Lady Vincent wrote a letter of thanks to the regiment for their attendance on these two occasions, and said: "There is absolutely no tribute of your love and affection that he would have appreciated more warmly. I know that the happiest and proudest moments of his life were those when he rode at the head of that regiment which he loved so dearly and served so faithfully."

The officers of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers were among the first to propose a permanent memorial, writing to say that they were about to place a brass to Sir Howard's memory in the Regimental Chapel in Wrexham Parish Church.

On St. George's Day a most impressive service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral. It was the anniversary day of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and the Prince of Wales, as Grand Master,

accompanied by the Princess, was present. After the reading of the special lessons the registrar read aloud the roll of the members of the Order who had died during the previous twelve months. The name of Sir Howard Vincent came forth in company with many others who had served their country well.

A word or two must be said as to the public bequests made by Sir Howard in his will. He left money gifts for public purposes to the Mayor and Corporation and to the Master Cutler and Cutlers Company of Sheffield; to the Philanthropic Funds of the Welsh Fusiliers and the Queen's Westminsters, "which I established"; to the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis for any public purpose, but preferably for the institution of some annual medal or reward for the most meritorious act in connection with the detection of crime by the Criminal Investigation Department.

The copyright of the *Police Code*, then in its fourteenth edition, he gave to the Commissioner of Police, in the hope that when new editions were published the profits might go to the Police Orphanage. He left his engravings of distinguished Conservatives to the Carlton Club, and his collection of medals awarded since 1600 for British battles, to "Mr. Speaker," for the Library of the House of Commons.

In conclusion, some of Sir Howard's last written words shall be given. It is touching to find that they were written about an ardent worker for Tariff Reform who had lately passed away. They applied so closely to Sir Howard himself that they form the best possible farewell words to this volume.

“In the natural order of things valiant soldiers must fall out from the fighting line. But the cause goes forward. On, and always on, must be our watchword.

“Look up and not down :  
Look forward and not back :  
And lend a hand ! ”

# APPENDIX I

## EXTRACTS FROM DIARY 1881

*Re*

### SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR C.I.D.

FOR COPING WITH  
FENIAN ORGANISATION.

EXTRACTS FROM PAPERS FOUND ON MICHAEL DAVITT  
WHEN ARRESTED ON 3rd FEBRUARY, 1881, IN DUBLIN.

#### (1) From Memoranda for 1880

31st December, 1880. Eventful year just dying out.  
1879, Education.  
1880, Organisation.  
1881, Result?

Hope my work for the year may prove beneficial to Ireland and its people, and tend to advance the cause of Humanity and Labour in every afflicted country.

#### (2) From telegram, dated 30/1/81.

John Rea, Her Majesty's Ulster Orange Fenian apprentice  
Boy Attorney-General.

The Grand Orange Hall, Belfast,

To the Rt. Hon. Michael Davitt, Her Presbyterian  
Majesty's Orange Fenian Chief Secretary for Ireland,  
Dublin.

Have just telegraph candidate Redmond and other New Ross Orange Fenian leaders as to paramount necessity for immediately returning me *pro tempore* to fight the base blood and brutal Whig oligarchs pledging myself to surrender seat immediately after conclusion of coercion bill debates. By all the love you bear to Ireland, and all the hatred you have always held to the base, bloody and brutal Whig oligarch whom I detested when they had me prisoner for what they called High Treason in the jail of Kilmainham in Eighteen forty eight, just as much as I do now, I conjure you my Orange Fenian friend, John Ferguson, abandon all other business. Go down forthwith to New Ross and get the consent of Redmond and all other genuine Orange Fenian men to my immediate return. I will without stint pay all legitimate expenses you may choose to incur, being now gloriously in funds which often was not so before, but I cannot possibly go up to New Ross myself as I must address great meeting of sworn and unsworn Orange-men exclusively to be held at Coleraine on Monday night to learn their rights to arms and lands under the Plantation of Ulster Royal Patent and to petition Her Most Gracious and Most Orthodox Presbyterian Majesty at once to dismiss the Marquis of Hartington and all other base, bloody and brutal Whigs from Her Cabinet. Therefore stand not on the order of your going, but go at once.

God save Ireland and no surrender.

(Signed) JOHN REA.

(3) *From telegram, dated 2/2/81.*

T. P. O'Connor, House of Commons.

To Michael Davitt, Land League, Sackville Street, Dublin.

Mr. Gladstone has given notice resolution to confer despotic powers on the Speaker, and has bought Tory support by limiting the new form of Cæsarism to the battle of Irish Members against coercion. The Irish Members are unmoved in their determination to continue their dogged and relentless opposition to every stage of the Bill.

(4) *From scrap of paper for press.*

(What intended to  
be said.)

The feeling among the members of the Irish Land League in and near Dublin is in favour of every possible aggressive movement, except a resort to actually violent measures.

(*Condensed for sending.*)

Feeling League here favour aggressive measures, not violence.

(5) *From half sheet of paper—torn.*

Now Micky darlint, show if you have any real pluck ; talk out after the coercion act is passed, as you have been, don't play the cur, and put your tail between your legs and be off to America.

Let us see if you have a backbone and Irish heart and will suffer in *person* (you won't in pocket, you keep your Land League salary too tight for yourself my Bhoy).

*Now* is the time to show your pluck, *or* the white feather, run, hook it to America, with full pockets.

(6) DEAREST MICHAEL,

For *God's sake* write to me when you can, you know I can be your "cousin" again while you are in prison.

I hardly know what I am doing.

Ever and ever,

Your devoted

BEE.

*Memo.*

*February 12, 1881.*

PRÉCIS OF A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF WOLVERHAMPTON UNDER DATE OF THE 10TH INSTANT.

There is a large Irish population in Wolverhampton and the surrounding district, and they have for a considerable time been closely watched. I have for some months been

aware of the existence of Fenian Lodges in the town, but I have looked upon them as almost powerless for evil. Some American Fenians here have endeavoured to excite the Irish by preaching treason and outrage, but hitherto without effect.

For some months there has been an extraordinary quiet among the Irish—hardly any crime, and the public-houses almost deserted. This may be partly owing to bad trade, but not altogether.

Very few Irish working men are attending the Roman Catholic Chapels. The priests are loyal; and in one case, where a priest professes extreme views on the land question, even his chapel is deserted.

On Sunday, the 30th of January, several proclamations, bearing a crumpled appearance, as though received through the post, were put up in the Town. I feel tolerably sure of a person who posted at least one of them, and shall not lose sight of him.

Anonymous letters have been received by the volunteers, warning them against plots to seize and destroy their arms. As the volunteer armoury here, containing 600 rifles, is in an exposed position, I effected the removal of the arms to the Police Station, without attracting any attention.

As far as I am able to judge, the existing state of things in England is the product of Irish love for secret conspiracy, acted upon by American ruffianism. The people, although easily excited, are, I think, slow to embark in hopeless enterprises, and I imagine that they never quite believe in their leaders.

These considerations would lead one to expect that any action which is taken will have to be taken by the leaders themselves. I think it, therefore, advisable to be prepared against such enterprises as blowing up Armouries, etc., which could be executed by two men. Our anticipation of such outrages must, however, be qualified by the consideration that there will certainly be a feeling among the Fenians that it is desirable to create a scare in England.

(Memo. sent to the Secretary of State.)



*Confidential.*

14 LAWRENCE STREET, MANCHESTER,

*February 14, 1881.*

I beg to forward for your information the attached copies of Fenian documents, with copies of the writer's letters. It now appears that Parnell has joined the I.R.B. party owing to his Land League movement having become a failure. I stated in former reports that if the Land League turned out a failure it was his, Parnell's, intention to join the I.R.B. party. If Mooney is stopping at the Shakespeare Inn, Devonshire Street, All Saints, he can be very easily seen there, but it appears that he goes to Liverpool on Wednesday next.

WM. LYTTLE.

H.C.

(Fenian documents)

To be burnt when it has served its purpose.

To the Soldiers of the I.N.

Brethren, the time is very fast approaching when the first struggle will be made to drive the accursed invaders from our beloved country. The Land League has failed and it has put the invaders on their guard. Mr. Parnell has seen his folly. He has within the last few days joined the ranks of the I.R.B.; many of his comrades will soon follow his example. We have given Mr. P. an introduction to Jas. Stephens who is now in France, but will be very soon in Ireland. Mr. S. will take the field in person. Mr. P. has promised to go to America and get assistance in men and money. He will hand over to me at the proper time all the funds of the Land League. If Davitt had taken our advice he would not now be in an English prison. The War Secretary will be demanding money very soon and he must have it. Brothers, work hard, organise and waste no funds; the time for working in England is short, we must strike hard and sure this time. Remember that unity is strength.

God save Ireland.

By order of the S.C.,

The Civil Secretary.

*February, 1881.*

*Not to be read at any meeting.*

To District and Centres.

No members of the I.R.B. (except those whom you may tell off for duty) must know of the Skirmishing Committee in your district, you may fully trust Mr. Mooney.

*Copy of Writer's letter.*

Sunday morning, 13th February, 1881. Attached is a copy of a document which is to be read at a meeting of my circle to day, and which is to be burnt in the presence of the meeting when read. It was not served until this morning. I will reply to your last letter to-night. I am posting this this morning as I don't wish to keep it in my possession. Will you please return it as soon as you have noted its contents?

Sunday night, 13th February, 1881. I had a conversation with —— (a member of the Skirmishing Committee). He states that Mooney is stopping at the Shakespeare Inn, Devonshire Street, All Saints, Manchester. He has to meet Mooney at the above place at eight to-morrow, Monday, night. Mooney leaves for Liverpool on Wednesday.

*Secret.*

*February 16, 1881.*

10 p.m.

X, an informant, has been with me for two hours—an intelligent young man from Limerick. He has been for two years in London, and has now good employment.

After much difficulty, Inspector Ahern and P.C. Enright had persuaded him to assist the police, on the solemn promise that his name should never appear.

When he first came to London, he declined to join the Irish Brotherhood. "I was at last compelled to, for my countrymen would only pass the time of day, and neither associate nor converse with me. When I consented I was

taken by —— to the Public House. There I was sworn in, no one being present in the room except O'Hallon who administered the oath. My friend was excluded. I went on both knees and swore to injure the English Government by all means in my power, to obey all orders, etc. I will let you have a copy as soon as I can, as well as of the Catechism. We met every Tuesday evening. There were usually from thirty to one hundred present, but I believe there were three hundred in the circle. John Daly, a cabinet-maker, was usually in the chair. In his absence it was filled by one Killeen (he is under observation) and occasionally one or two Yankee-looking men were present. The Committee proposed various resolutions condemning the Government. When anything secret had to be arranged they retired. We each paid 1s. 2d. a week while in work, and 6d. a week when sick. The proceedings were always very regular. Drinking was discouraged. No names were ever mentioned. The collector was called A, the treasurer B, the centre (Daly) C. We never addressed a brother by his name, and no one except the centre and the collector had a list of the members. The sign of recognition was the placing of the forefinger of the closed right hand below the lower lip. At the meeting three weeks ago a pattern rifle from Manchester, and another from Birmingham were shown, and approved, as also what might be a fuze. It was stated that, if the Coercion Bill passed, an attempt would be made on the Premier's house. Some of the funds subscribed were understood to have been sent to O'Donovan Rossa's Skirmishing Fund. He is a good man. Stephens is thought nothing of. His name is respected, but he is looked upon as incompetent. I don't know who the leader is. I don't believe there is one. I never heard the name of Mooney. It was never mentioned. The name of 'the Count' or Denely is also unknown to me. There are always said to be several circles in London, but one can't ask questions without exciting suspicion. A young hand is little trusted. Killeen's sister, I believe, conveys arms to Ireland. At the mass after Davitt was arrested, the order was circulated that

no meeting would be held for the present. We were told that the police were watching the usual public-houses. We were to adjourn to another (naming it), but this was declared also unsafe. There will be no more meetings until after the Coercion Bill is passed. I don't believe any are being held in London. Irishmen are becoming frightened. Insp. Ahern alone prevented my discharge last Saturday. The manager said he would not have an Irishman on the place.

"I am not giving information for money. I am doing so because I believe my subscriptions have only gone to support Yankee scoundrels. I will let you know all which passes. I am not high up, but I am just the sort of chap who would be chosen for a blowing up. They don't like too well educated men for this sort of thing. There are two ways of selecting an operator. In twenty blanks placed in a bag, there are two or three pieces of paper with the word 'shoot.' The first who draws it is to do the act, the others are to see that it is done; or among twenty blanks there are ten pieces with something on them. The drawers of those have to execute the orders. I am sure to know if anything is decided upon. You can rely upon my telling you the truth on condition that you will never let it be known who your informant is."

C. E. H. VINCENT.

*Secret.*

*February 18, 1881.*

#### MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

(1) Mr. Townsend has returned from Manchester, but he has not found it possible thoroughly to clear up the matter as to Thomas Mooney. This person, by calling a bricklayer, appears to have been almost invariably in the most necessitous circumstances, which are little consonant with the formidable leadership attributed to him. The mother of the prisoner Riley, at whose trial he gave evidence to character, avers that she has not seen him since May, 1879. This is corroborated in other quarters. But an alleged centre named Farrell

states he saw him five months ago. There is no police officer or other person who can positively identify him. The description of him even has now been varied.

Mr. Townsend has seen the original informant, and thinks favourably of his sincerity ; but his intelligence appears to be mere hearsay.

(2) The movements of the man Mooney are suspicious, but he has not yet committed any overt act. He met Mr. Dillon, M.P., last night, and conversed with him for some time.

That gentleman is under the impression that he was constantly followed in Paris by English detectives, and that he is so followed here. It is not the case.

(3) The Secretary of State expressed on Tuesday last an opinion that intimidation would be the best course to pursue to destroy this Fenian organisation, which, though composed of badly educated mechanics and labourers, is alleged to be managed on a system not attained by any recognised body. I respectfully expressed my concurrence in Sir William Harcourt's views.

I would therefore ask if the Secretary of State approves of my following out the course suggested. It will not be in accord with the mysterious principles of political espionage. But it will so alarm the ignorant members of this Fenian Brotherhood, so mystify them as to the amount of information in the possession of the Government and the intention of the State as regards them, that, in the opinion of those most experienced in the matter, it will break up the circles.

That this is possible is evidenced by the immediate change in the state of affairs after the revocation of the licence of Michael Davitt.

There will be no paid informants, whose information is all but valueless, save as matter for official memoranda. There will be little costly and difficult observation on persons who, if possessed of ordinary common sense, without the *mens recta*, soon know that they are observed, and are careful to commit no act contrary to law.

What I propose is this in brief. If meetings are held in

one house, that house shall be kept under such observation that another place of assembly must be selected, and so again with the latter. Persons suspected of Fenian sympathies, and still more of rendering assistance to Fenian circles, will be treated in such manner as to give rise to the belief that their safety is in jeopardy.

I shall not exceed the law. I shall be prepared to show cause for every act. But the details will not be such as can be separately submitted for the Secretary of State's approval. I only require Sir William Harcourt's general assent to my meeting such an ordinary association of poor, ignorant, deluded, timid men as compose the Fenian societies by common-sense means, which will prevent the mischief, instead of by tortuous measures which have no result but the creation of alarm.

I shall act with a full knowledge of my responsibility to the Law and to the Secretary of State, but the measure will be such as, adopted simultaneously in the large towns of England, will, without commission of any illegality or raising any parliamentary protest, disturb the centres of Fenianism, and show that Great Britain will not be a perfectly safe refuge for persons flying from the measures of the Irish Coercion Bill.

(Sd.) C. E. H. VINCENT.

## APPENDIX II

STRICTLY PRIVATE LETTER  
UPON THE PRESENT STATE OF IRELAND  
ADDRESSED TO  
HIS EXCELLENCY THE EARL OF CARNARVON

By C. E. HOWARD VINCENT, Esq.

*September 25th, 1885.*

1, GROSVENOR SQUARE,

*September, 1885.*

DEAR LORD CARNARVON,

You were so good as to say when I passed through Dublin on my way homewards that you would be glad if I could let you hear the impressions formed by my recent tour in Ireland.

Your Excellency is aware that I went thither in order to inform myself as to the state of the country, and personally to study what will probably be the principal question before the next Parliament, in which I hope to be.

I enjoyed exceptional advantages to this end. The Office of Director of Criminal Investigations which I held from 1878 to 1884 has placed me on friendly terms with most of the officials, and given me peculiar knowledge of the course of events during that period. High ecclesiastical letters ensured a warm reception from the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The members of the Irish Parliamentary Party were also exceedingly anxious that every source of information should be opened, and gave special injunctions to this end.

. The leading feature in the Irish situation of to-day all

must feel to be the National League. The Land League was suppressed in the latter part of 1881, and in its place the National League was soon founded. The toleration by Lord Spencer of its first establishment and its growth in the early days is answerable for the powerful engine it now is. Its aims are defined to be :

1. National Self-Government.
2. Land Law Reform.
3. Local Self-Government.
4. The Development and Encouragement of the Labour and Industrial Interests of Ireland.

It has over 1100 branches. There are in Ireland 2425 civil and 1084 ecclesiastical parishes. It may, therefore, be taken that every ecclesiastical parish in the country has a branch, and the larger parishes more than one in the different wards.

The Central Branch is under the presidency of Mr. Parnell, M.P., but its business is mainly conducted by Mr. Harrington, M.P. Its organ is *United Ireland*, conducted by Mr. William O'Brien, M.P. The average strength of the branch is over 200. The National League numbers therefore more than 200,000 members in Ireland.

Each branch has a President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. The former is, in about three-fourths of the cases, the Parish Priest or his senior Curate. The branches remit their funds to the Central Office, and to it all applications for assistance for evicted tenants or other needy members must be addressed, through the local branch supported by the unanimous vote of the members duly authenticated. Some branches I found sent from £300 to £400 within twelve months. Others, only subscribing £30 or so, had received assistance to the amount of £200.

The organisation is very perfect, and its affairs conducted on most business-like principles. Large sums have been spent in parliamentary revision, and masses of literature are scattered through the branches.

The National League holds the country within its grasp. Its strength is not to be measured even by its vast commercia



force. I formed, nevertheless, a fairly favourable opinion as to the moderation of its leading members. There are some violent spirits on the council. But they are in the minority. Every effort is now being made to prevent outrages and to stop even boycotting. Signs are, however, not wanting of the branches outstripping the Central Office.

A letter was shown me urging the branch at Thurles, the residence of Dr. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel, to refrain from boycotting a man who had supplied the constabulary with cars and to accept his apology. The Rev. Mr. Cantwell, Administrator of the Arch-Diocese, a violent partisan who had once narrowly escaped arrest, was the president. Mr. Harrington's letter was read ; Mr. Cantwell urged acceptance of its advice. The meeting unanimously disregarded it, and declined to consider the matter for six months.

This brings me to the position of the Catholic Clergy. The late Cardinal McCabe was much opposed to their being concerned in political movements. The Archbishops of Armagh and Tuam were quiescent. Some of the Bishops forbade, others discountenanced, their priests actively connecting themselves with the League. The Central Council were anxious to secure their services as a guarantee of order. The Archbishop of Cashel threw himself eagerly on the side of the Nationalists, and the majority followed his example. He was summoned to Rome. The Pope is reported to have desired him to desist from what in his view was a republican movement. Dr. Croke persisted that it was but constitutional agitation. He declined to submit, and his return to Ireland was a scene of triumph and ovation. The Pope's appointment of Archbishop Walsh to Dublin was a concession to the National feeling. Like result attended the Papal veto of the Parnell tribute or testimonial. It flagged and halted at £4000. The Pope condemned it, and as the treasurer told me it jumped to £40,000.

This is indicative of the present position of clerical influence. The National League has acquired the guiding authority of the Priests. Their only chance is to swim with the tide of popular feeling. Life itself is dependent upon it,

to say nothing of spiritual requirements. The Archbishop of Tuam, long reserved, has now been compelled to join the movement, and the present exceptions are almost confined to the old men of failing health.

Albeit the feeling of a very large majority of the better class of priests is decidedly in favour of the Imperial connection, and they look on the present position with ill-disguised personal dislike and fear. This is much to their credit, for little has been done for them in the past. Their principal complaint is now directed to the want of university education. The Queen's Colleges at Cork and Galway cost about £25,000 a year. Neither is successful. The amalgamation of the two and the diversion of the balance towards the University College they have founded would meet, I think, with grateful response. Possibly one of the buildings might be handed over to the College.

Although the influence of the priesthood is not what it was, it constitutes the only drag on the impetuosity of the people, and is, in my opinion, worth conciliating, and not the less because its ranks are recruited almost entirely from the peasantry.

#### CONSTABULARY.

No words are sufficient to describe the splendid bearing of the constabulary throughout the country, but I think that friendly personal communication with the Catholic Clergy might advantageously be enjoined on the officers in charge of districts.

#### THE CRIMES ACT.

It is noteworthy that I did not meet with a single superior police officer or magistrate who thought the re-enactment of the Peace Preservation Act lately expired desirable or necessary. It had no direct provision against boycotting, and was therefore largely powerless against the present evil. I am persuaded that Special and Limited Legislation for Ireland is a mistake. The power of magisterial inquiry without the existence of an accused person, of change of venue and of trial by special juries, would be of infinite

advantage in all three kingdoms in the prevention and detection of ordinary as well as of special crime. The prevention of all licensed persons refusing to sell at reasonable times would avert a great evil. This existing special legislation would not be necessary.

#### THE LAND COMMISSION.

The Land Commission has made a reduction of rents averaging twenty per cent. This establishes a *prima facie* charge of rack-renting, but it is met by a diminution in the value of land, owing to bad farming. On some estates the rent has been habitually raised on stated occasions, such as succession or marriage. On others nothing has been done. The property of the Duke of Devonshire stands foremost in the care bestowed upon it. Hundreds of thousands have been lavished for the good of the people, and the Land Commission was not only unable to reduce rents but in one case had to raise them. It must not be thought that the reduction of twenty per cent in the rents, large as it seems, has created any satisfaction. Popular opprobrium is hurled at the Land Commission for not making a far more sweeping reduction.

#### THE LAND PURCHASE ACT.

The Land Purchase Act is felt to be a step in the right direction. But it will not be largely availed of :

1. Because the Landlords, with few exceptions, think they are entitled to ask from twenty to twenty-three years purchase.

2. Because the National League think that they are not entitled to more than from twelve to sixteen, or forbids any transaction without their authority.

3. Because the people feel that Landlordism is dead, that land will fall far below its present price, and that tenant right is worth as much as the fee simple. The other day at Bandon the tenant right of a farm rented at £99 a year was sold for £900.

## THE NATIONALISTS' AIM.

What the Nationalists want is a separate and independent Parliament—and nothing less. No development of local government, no institution of County Boards or a Central Council will satisfy them or put an end to the agitation. The Alpha and the Omega is the separate Parliament.

## SEPARATION.

At the same time, with a very few violent exceptions, the leaders are for the time opposed to total separation. Some only because they feel that it is impossible. In this class is Mr. O'Brien. Others because their trade would be ruined. The clergy because it would mean the establishment of a godless republic. The words of the Archbishop of Tuam were without knowledge corroborated by the Archbishops of Dublin and Cashel, and nearly all the clergy with whom I was in communication. Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Harrington, Mr. Sullivan endorsed them. The Mayor of Limerick, the most prominent Nationalist in the South, declared that if Separation was dreamt of he would at once leave the movement. Thus writes His Grace :

“As regards separation from England. I never heard anyone seriously think of the question. Whether we get our Parliament or not, one thing in my mind is quite certain and incontrovertible, that no one out of Bedlam would think of separation. Every man believes the attempt to effect it would be utterly futile and on account of the indescribable miseries it would entail, not to speak of other reasons, utterly criminal.

“It could only end in our being the prey to some other great power—France or America, which would impose on us a most galling and intolerable burden from a spiritual and social point of view. So that as regards the question of separation, be the complications or difficulties what they may, no sane man thinks of that.”

## MILITARY OCCUPATION.

The general feeling is that even if a separate Parliament were granted, the military occupation would be welcomed as that of a spending body. But this view I do not share especially unless the whole of their equipment was provided by Irish labour.

## THE LAND QUESTION.

Supposing a separate Parliament to be granted, there are innumerable theories as to dealing with the Land Question. Mr. Healy would raise £100,000,000 in America and force landlords to sell at that, viz. £47,000,000 below twenty years' purchase. His view is shared by some but not by Archbishop Croke. Mr. Justice O'Hagan would provide in the Constitution against any change for a quarter of a century.

But Mr. Dwyer Gray, editor of *The Freeman's Journal*, thinks the difficulty so great as to make a separate Parliament impossible, until the extension of the Land Purchase Act has greatly reduced it.

## THE FENIANS.

There are, of course, many Nationalists who are Fenians in sympathy and in fact. But they are few in number among the principal men. The leaders dread the violence, the influence, the jealousy, the revenge of the Fenian exiles. It was in the power of Mr. Parnell to stop the supplies of the Skirmishing Funds in America which procured the commission of the dynamite outrages. A circular conveyed by easy means to every Irish man, woman, and child in the United States would have emptied the exchequer within a week. I asked why he had not done it, and thus established his reputation and secured English goodwill. He dared not try it. It would have killed him.

## MR. PARNELL.

Mr. Parnell himself has greater influence by far than Grattan or O'Connell ever had. He holds himself aloof from

his followers. He seldom speaks and avoids display. But he is on a rope of the finest wire. A step to the right or the left and he falls to-morrow. His Protectionist speech the other day is strongly condemned, as also his one Chamber announcement. He made it to silence the violent who, as in O'Connell's time, began to chafe. There were interviews reported with Stephens and others. He saw the storm brewing, and spoke boldly.

Michael Davitt is far more friendly to Parnell. There was lately an open breach. It has been healed until after the elections by the good office of Mr. Dwyer Gray. Davitt is jealous, ambitious, and reckless.

#### IRISH GRIEVANCES.

There are some genuine grievances: chief among them is the expense of promoting Private Bills at Westminster and taking over witnesses to London, which has been excessive, and the system is not to be lauded. The Grand Jury system is also a genuine grievance. The panel is sometimes composed of men without residence in the country or contributory to the large sums and great work they have to decide upon on the presentment of road sessions.

#### WHAT IS REQUIRED

The adjustment of these and many other genuine grievances is much to be desired.

#### WHAT IS POSSIBLE.

The most careful study cannot bring one to an opinion that a separate Parliament is possible for many years to come, if ever, or that its loyalty could be assured under present conditions. But I think that a carefully formed Royal Commission might be advantageously issued to inquire into the whole question of the administration of Ireland, and proceeding upon a liberal basis might succeed in effecting great good and inaugurating a sound system of local government. The more time the National League is given the

more will its work exhaust itself. Its forcible suppression would now be attended with the greatest danger.

I have, Sir, complied with your wish and told you frankly that which I went to see for my private and personal information. I have probably told you little that is new. But I must add this final impression, and it is more pleasing than the rest. It is the personal popularity inspired by your Excellency and Lady Carnarvon, and the good feeling produced by the recent viceregal tours in the West and North.

The Irish question is more complex and difficult than can be imagined by one not on the spot.

Its solution is the problem of the century. It is felt that although Mr. Gladstone is thought by the National League to be trying to outbid the Conservatives and Mr. Chamberlain has completely changed his views during the last twelve months, that the party now in office are most likely to be able and willing to find a satisfactory remedy, if it be possible consistently with the maintenance of The Minor.

I am, dear Lord Carnarvon,

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "C. H. Vincent." The signature is written in dark ink on a light background. The first part of the signature, "C. H.", is written in a more formal, blocky cursive, while "Vincent." is written in a more fluid, flowing cursive. The signature is positioned at the bottom of the page, below the typed text.





# INDEX

## A

Active Service, Sir Howard medically unfit for, 315  
 Aix la Chapelle, 8  
 Akers-Douglas, Mr., 23  
 Alexander II, Emperor, 29  
 Alfonso XII, King, 138  
 Alien Immigration, 204, 294  
 — — Pamphlet on, 336  
 — — Royal Commission on, 337  
 — — Sir Howard's evidence on, 338  
 Aliens Bill, The, 334  
 American Team, Banquet to the, 284  
 Anarchism, Conference at Rome on, 301  
 Anderson, Dr., 258  
 Anderson, Sir Robert, 61, 62, 143, 338  
 Animals, Sir Howard's love of, 250  
 Anglo-German Convention, The, 202  
 Amiens, 6  
 Appleton, Col. D., 284  
 Armenian Question, Sir Howard's report on the, 298  
 Armstrong, Eliza, 205  
 Army, Sir Howard gazetted out of the, 42  
 Ashbourne, Lord, 199  
 Asquith, Mr., 360  
 Association for the Preservation of Agriculture, Meeting of the, 197  
 Australia, 155  
 Author, Sir Howard as an, 255  
 Avebury, Lord, 206

## B

Baden-Powell, Sir George, 205  
 Balfour, Mr. A. J., 191  
 Bar, Sir Howard's call to the, 41  
 Barnardo's Homes, 251  
 "Basildon," 250

Bath, Speech at, 221  
 Bayford, Mr., 46  
 Baylis, Mr. J. H., 44  
 Bell, v.c., Col. E. M., 12  
 Bennett, Mr., 313, 316, 318  
 Bequests, Sir Howard's, 363  
 Berlin, 23  
 Bernhardt, Mme. Sarah, 132, 251  
 Berry, Mr. Graham, 155  
 Big Loaf, The, 218  
 Bills, Sir Howard introduces his first, 188  
 Bismarck, Count Herbert, 131  
 Blake, Col. G. F., 43  
 Blake, Mr., 153  
 Blandford, Autumn manoeuvres at, 32  
 Board of Works, The, 206  
 Boer, Letter from a, 309  
 — War, The, 308  
 — — Second visit to the, 330  
*Bombay Gazette*, Military correspondent of the, 44  
 Bordighera, 358  
 Borthwick, Sir Algernon, 245  
 Bourne, Mr. Stephen, 209  
 Bournemouth, 357  
 Bovill, Lord Justice, 80  
 Bradlaugh, Mr. Charles, 289  
 Bradley, Dean, 253  
*Braemar Castle*, The s.s., 331  
 Brampton, Lord, 83, 258  
 Bright, Letter from Mr. John, 140  
 Broadbent, Sir William, 311  
 Brodrick, Mr., 324  
 Bryce, Mr., 233  
 Buller, Sir Redvers, 131, 320, 330  
 Burdett-Coutts, Baroness, 97  
 Burial, Sir Howard's directions as to his, 359  
 Burke, Mr., 119  
 Burnaby, Col. F., 134  
 Burnham, Lord, 48  
 Burns, Mr. John, 230  
 Burton Crescent, The murder in, 72  
 Burton, Sir R., 135  
 Bylandt, Count, 135

## C

Campbell, Dr., 253  
 Canada, Visits to, 153, 344  
 Canadian Preference, 226  
 Cannes, 14, 45, 312, 343, 356, 359  
 — — Cemetery at, 359  
 — — Protestant funerals at, 360  
 Cap Martin, The Villa, 352  
 Cape Town, 317  
 Carey, James, 124  
*Carisbrooke Castle*, The s.s., 317  
 Carnarvon Interview, The, 180  
 — Lord, 173, 176, 177  
 Carson, Sir Edward, 292  
 Cavendish, Lady Frederick, 122  
 — Lord Frederick, 120  
 Central Sheffield, Sir Howard candidate for, 162  
 Chamberlain, Mr. J., 131, 333, 334  
 — — Sir Howard organises banquet to, 238  
 Channell, Baron, 80  
 Chaplin, Mr., 209, 231  
 Charles Street, Fenian attempt to blow up offices in, 125  
 Chatham, 15  
 Chieveley Camp, 318  
 Children's Courts, 247, 342  
 Church Army, The, 251  
 Churchill, Lord Randolph, 173, 202  
 City Imperial Volunteers, The, 312  
 — — Sir Howard to command infantry of the, 313  
 City Temple, The, 253  
 Colonial Conference, The, 210  
 — Institute, Paper read at the, 169  
 Columbus, Statue of, 353  
 Concentration Camps, Sir Howard's report on the, 330  
 Connaught, H.R.H. the Duke of, 268  
 Constantinople, Visit to, 44, 298  
 Convict Office, The, 98  
 Copenhagen, Dance at, 25  
 Coquelin, M., 131, 347  
 Corn, Tax on foreign, 297  
 Cowan, Mr. Victor, 246  
 Cowen, Mr. Joseph, 89  
 Criminal Appeal Bill, The, 102  
 — — Investigation, Sir Howard, Director of, 53  
 Croft, Mr. B. Hutton, 357  
 Croke, Archbishop, 183  
 Cronje, General, 320, 322, 324  
 Cross, Lord, 58, 65, 140  
 Currie, Sir Philip, 301, 306

## D

*Daily Telegraph*, Sir Howard Special Correspondent of the, 23  
 Daughter, Marriage of Sir Howard and Lady Vincent's, 357  
 Davitt, Michael, 107, 109, 110, 124, 365, 382  
 Death, Sir Howard Vincent's, 359  
 De Berg, M., 28  
 Decorations, Sir Howard's, 267  
 De Lamartine, M., 7  
 Denning, Inspector, 108  
 De Perrinot, Vicomte, 7  
 Derby, Lord, 346  
 Detective System, The French, 54  
 Diamond Jubilee, The, 300  
 Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, The, 251  
 Divorce Court, Sir Howard practises in the, 46  
 Dolgorouski, Prince, 43  
 Dresden, 7  
 Dundonald, Lord, 318  
 Dunraven, Lord, 212

## E

Early years, 1  
 Eastbourne, 279  
 East London, 320  
 Ebury Street, Dinners in, 128  
 Edinburgh, T.R.H. the Duke and Duchess of, 119, 120, 126  
 Edward VII, King, 360  
 — — Accession of, 325  
 Effingham, Earl of, 3  
 Egar, Patrick, 113  
 Egerton, Lady Louisa, 122  
 Eliot, Sir Henry, 44  
 Emperor of Germany, The, 332  
 — of Russia, Assassination of the, 87  
 Eugénie, The Empress, 352  
 European Countries, Sir Howard's acquaintance with, 349  
 Explosive Substances Bill, The, 127

## F

Fair Trader, Sir Howard a, 169  
 "Farewell Orders," Sir Howard's, 280  
 Farrer, Lord, 223  
 Father, Letter to his, 39  
 Fawcett, Mrs., 331

Fenian Conspiracy, Memorandum as to, 105  
 — — Documents, 369  
 — — Outrages, 117  
 — — Plots, 90  
 Fenianism, Sir Howard's report on, 370  
 — Memorandum on, 372  
 Fife, Earl of, 132  
 Fire Brigade Committee, Sir Howard  
 Chairman of, 206  
 Firth College, 196  
 Fiscal Reform, Sir Howard champions, 190  
 Florence, 14  
 Forbes, Mr. Archibald, 49  
 Foreign Goods, Government purchase of, 232  
 — Prison-Made Goods Act, The, 301  
 Forster, Mr., 108, 113, 123  
 "Forty Thousand Miles over Land and Water," 153, 247  
 Fourth Party, The, 149  
 Fowler, Sir H., 261, 292  
 France, The feeling towards England in, 351  
 Freiheit, The, 87  
 French Exhibition, Sir Howard a Commissioner for the, 301

G

Gallagher, Arrest of, 126  
 Galt, Sir Alexander, 213  
 Gardner, Mr. Richard, 244  
 Gatacre, Sir Wm., 320  
 Gaul, The s.s., 322  
 General Election of 1900, 324  
 — — Sir Howard's last, 343  
 "General Orders," Sir Howard's retirement in, 282  
 George V, Sympathy of King, 361  
 German Emperor, Inspection by the, 267  
 Gladstone, Mr. W. E., 114, 121, 135, 140, 208, 234  
 — Ministry, Defeat of the, 175  
 — Mrs., 122  
 Glenesk, Lord, 132  
 Goldwin Smith, Mr., 154  
 Gorst, Sir John, 231, 248  
 Goschen, Lord, 150, 227  
 Gould, Murder of Mr., 82  
 Granville, Earl, 27, 121, 346  
 Gray, Mr. Dwyer, 179, 181, 185

Gródno Hussars, The, 28  
 Guide to the House of Commons, Sir Howard's, 259  
 Gurnard Bay, 331

H

Hadfield, Sir Robert, 165  
 Hagan, Inspector, 108  
 Haldane, Lord, 288  
 Halsbury, Lord, 199, 290  
 Hamburg, 24  
 Harcourt, Sir Wm., 80, 105, 106, 112, 116, 118, 120, 123, 127, 131, 138, 140, 147, 237, 258, 279  
 Hardaker, Mr., 94-6  
 Hardinge, General A., 32  
 Hardy, Mr., 52  
 Harland, Sir E., 212  
 Harrington, Mr. T., 179, 185  
 Hartington, Lord, 120, 121, 201  
 Hastings, 3  
 — Speech at, 224  
 Hawkins, Mrs., 10  
 Henderson, Sir Edmund, 63, 143  
 Herschell, Lord, 135, 290  
 Hobart Pasha, 44  
 Holker, Sir John, 57  
 Holmes, Mr. R. W. A., 326  
 Holstein, Journey through, 24  
 Host, Sir Howard as a, 129  
 Houghton, Lord, 132  
 Huddleston, Baron, 48  
*Hue and Cry*, The, 84  
 Hussein Ali Pasha, 44  
 Hyndman, Mr. H. M., 225  
 Hythe, 13

I

Ibbetson, Sir H. S., 244  
 Illness of 1899, Sir Howard's, 311  
 — of 1903, Sir Howard's, 279  
 Imperialist, Sir Howard an, 236  
 Imperial Preference, 208  
 India, 161  
 Ingham, Sir James, 84  
 Injured Animals Act, The, 251  
 Ireland, Sir Howard's letter to Lord Carnarvon on, 375  
 — Tour through, 181-3  
 Irish Constabulary Commission, The, 326  
*Irish Times*, Letter to the, 35  
 Isleworth Conservative Working Men's Club, Address to the, 159

## J

James of Hereford, Lord, 337  
*Jewish Chronicle*, The, 335  
 Judicial Trustees Act, The, 291

## K

Kane, Dr., 191  
 Key, Sir Cooper, 109  
 Keir Hardie, Mr., 230, 232  
 Kimberley, 322  
 Kindheartedness, Sir Howard's, 240  
*Kinfauns Castle*, the s.s., 330  
 Kishineff, 49  
 Kitchener, Lord, 320, 329  
 Klip Drift, 321  
 Königgrätz, 8

## L

Labouchere, Mr. H., 91, 107, 132, 233  
 Languages, Sir Howard on the study of, 347  
 Last days, Sir Howard's, 356  
 Layard, Sir H. Austen, 132  
 League of Mercy, The, 251  
 Le Breton, Mme., 353  
 Legh, Appreciation by Col. Hubert, 272  
 Legion of Honour, Sir Howard receives the Cross of the, 351  
 Leighton, Sir F., 132  
 Lépine, M., 70, 351  
 Leslie, Mr., 43  
 Letter-writer, Sir Howard as a, 257  
 Levy, Sir E., 16  
 Liberal Party, Sir Howard leaves the, 151  
 Liddell, Sir Adolphus, 66  
 Linguist, Sir Howard as a, 130  
 Literary works, Sir Howard's early, 33, 258  
 Loftus, Lord Augustus, 24, 29  
 London, Bishop Temple of, 139  
 Long, Mr. Walter, 231  
 Loreburn, Lord, 290, 292  
 Lowther, Mr. James, 212, 225, 227, 229  
 Lushington, Sir Godfrey, 92, 301, 306  
 Lysons, Sir Daniel, 13  
 Lyttle, Mr., 369

## M

MacDonald, Sir John, 213  
 Mackenzie, Mr., 154  
 Mackinnon, Col., 314  
 Mahaffy, Professor, 181  
 Maiden Speech, Sir Howard's, 188  
 Maidstone, 149  
 Manning, Cardinal, 3, 252, 304  
 Mansfield, Col., 28  
 Map, The Howard Vincent, 170, 259  
 Maritzburg, 318  
 Marlborough Club, Sir Howard's election to, 138  
 Marriage, Sir Howard's, 246  
 Marseilles, 279  
 Marshall, Mr. J., 168  
 Masham, Lord, 225  
 Massachusetts' Protection of Offenders' System, 153  
 Mayne, Sir Richard, 74, 87  
 McCarthy, Mr. Justin, 177, 179  
 McKinley, Assassination of President, 307  
 — Tariff, The, 222  
 Memorial Services, 361  
 Mentone, 358  
 Merchandise Marks Bill, The, 221  
 — — Act, The, 293  
 Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage, The, 97, 244  
 Mezzroff, Professor, 151  
 Middlesex Rangers, Colonel of the, 46  
 Modder River, The, 318  
 Moffatt, Sir Howard's engagement to Miss Ethel, 139  
 — Mr. George, M.P., 139  
 Mooney, Thomas, 113  
 Montebello, The Comte de, 131  
 Morgan, Mr., 30  
 — Mr. E., 241, 256  
 Morley, Mr. J., 237  
 Moscow, 43  
 Most, Johann, 87  
 Mundella, Mr., 191, 222  
 Münster, Count, 23, 130

## N

National Flag, Sir Howard on the, 345  
 — *Review*, Article in the, 235  
 — Union of Conservative Associations, 211, 215, 230, 260, 297, 301, 324  
 Navan, 33  
 New York, National Guard of, 283

New Zealand, 155  
 Nicholas, Grand Duke, 49  
 Northcote, Sir Stafford, 156  
 Nulty, Bishop, 34

O

O'Connor, Mr. T. P., 366  
 Odessa, 49  
 Official Trustee Bill, The, 288  
 Old Age Pensions, 203  
 Oldham, The Member for, 340  
 Olympic Games, The Council of the, 353  
 Opposition, Sir Howard in, 229  
 Optimist, Sir Howard an, 195  
 Ottawa Conference, The, 236

P

Paardeberg Camp, 320  
 Pamphleteer, Sir Howard as a, 260  
 Panoply and pomp, Sir Howard's delight in, 266  
 Paris, 7  
 Parker, Dr., 253  
 Parliamentary Pauper Immigration Committee, 335  
 Parliament, Sir Howard's first idea of entering, 31  
 — Sir Howard a candidate for, 148  
 Parnell, Mr. C. S., 117, 178, 186  
 Pate, Robert, 68  
 Pawnbrokers' Protection Society, 92  
 Pettifer, Mr. H. J., 215  
 Pietri, M., 352  
 Phoenix Park Murders, The, 119  
 Pinkerton, Mr. T., 86  
 Piræus, The, 45  
 Plimsoll, Mr. Samuel, 174, 198  
 Poland, Mr., 79  
 Police, Criminal Prosecution against the, 78  
 — Code, Issue of Sir Howard's, 82  
 — *Gazette*, The, 85  
 — Pensioners' Society, The, 251  
 Policy as Colonel of Volunteers, Sir Howard's, 269  
 Popularity, Sir Howard's, 192  
 Press, Sir Howard a writer for the, 21  
 Prevention of Crimes Act, The, 100  
 — of Cruelty to Animals Society, The, 251  
 Primrose League, The, 261  
 Prince Imperial, The, 352

Probation of First Offenders Bill, The, 198, 287  
 — of Prisoners System, 102  
 Protection of First Offenders Bill, The, 199  
 Prusso-Austrian War, The, 7  
 Public Trustee, The, 287  
 — — Office of the, 293  
 Pump Court, 220  
*Punch's* Diary of a Holiday, 136

Q

Queen's Westminsters, The, 300  
 — — Sir Howard's speech to the, 316  
 — — Head-quarters of the, 264  
 — — Return from the war of the, 328

R

Rampolla, Cardinal, 304  
 Ranges Act, The, 272  
 Rathmore, Lord, 201  
 Rea, John, 366  
 Reformatory and Industrial School Association, Address to the, 200  
 Religion, Sir Howard's, 252  
 Return from South Africa, Sir Howard's, 324  
 Rhodes, Mr. Cecil, 320  
 Richardson, Mr. S. G., 163  
 Ridley, Sir M. W., 71, 245  
 Ritchie, Mr., 297  
 Roberts, Lord, 271, 320  
 Robertshaw, Mr. J., 167  
 Roebuck, Mr. J. A., 168  
 Rollitt, Sir Albert, 292  
 Rookwood, Lord, 60  
 Rosebery, Lord, 237  
 Rostodloff, Countess, 29  
 Rolands, Mr. Bowen, 288  
 Royal Berks Militia, The, 47  
 — Style and Titles Bill, The, 205  
 — Welsh Fusiliers, The, 12  
 Russell, Sir William, 22, 132  
 Russia, Journey to, 342  
 Russian Credit, 342  
 — Spies, 70

S

St. Aldwyn, Lord, 227  
 St. George's Vestry, 150  
 St. Giles' Christian Mission, 97, 251

St. Michael and St. George, Anniversary service of the Order of, 362  
 St. Petersburg, Journey to, 27  
 Salisbury, Marquis of, 175, 219, 222, 226, 298, 302, 307, 336, 339  
 Samuel, Mr. S. M., 335  
 Sandhurst, 8, 11  
 Sandringham, Visit to, 135  
 Saunders, 91  
 Saving Life at Sea Bill, 287  
 Scotland Yard, Sir Howard leaves, 144-7  
 Scott, Dr., 4  
 Seely, Major, 341  
 Selborne, Lord Chancellor, 95  
*Serapis*, H.M.S., 45  
 Servants, Sir Howard and his, 241  
 Sharpshooters, Sir Howard offers to raise one thousand, 308  
 Shaw, Sir Eyre Massey, 207  
 Sheffield, Sir Howard's first speech at, 173  
 — Last visit to, 358  
 — Radical, Sir Howard and the, 243  
 Shield, Sir Howard presents a silver, 284  
 Skinner, Mr. Hilary, 49  
 Slinfold, 2, 9  
 Smith, Mr. Samuel, 248  
 — Mr. W. H., 149  
 Social Democracy, Report on, 66  
 — Service Association, Meeting of the, 101  
 South Eastern Circuit, Sir Howard joins the, 47  
 Speaker, Sir Howard as a, 129  
 Spencer, Earl, 33, 38  
 Spain and Portugal, Visit to, 138  
 Sprigg, Sir Gordon, 213  
 Stalbridge, Lord, 149  
 Stanley, Mr. H. M., 202  
 Starkie, Mr. R. F., 326  
 Stracey, Col., 266  
 Stead, Mr. W. T., 205  
 Stephen, Mr. Justice, 76, 79  
 Stephens, James, 113  
 Sterkstroom, 320  
 Stewart, Mr., 291  
 Stivens, Dr. Lyne, 358  
 Stöffel, Col., 22  
 Stoke d'Abernon, 140  
 Stolen Goods Bill, The, 93  
 Storey's Gate Road, 201  
 Stuart-Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B., 166, 231, 333  
 — — Col. the Hon. E. J., 328  
 Sturt, General Napier, 20, 30, 58  
 Sullivan, Mr., 181

## T

Tact, Sir Howard's, 249  
 Talbot, Lord E., 248  
 Tariff Reform, 296  
 Teck, Duke of, 132, 139  
 Tennant, Mr., 248  
 Thieves' Supper, The, 99  
 Titley, 81  
*Tory Democratic Gazette*, The, 219  
 Trades' Union Congress at Norwich, The, 233  
 Tupper, Sir Charles, 214, 235  
 Typical Day, Sir Howard's, 255

## U

Udale, Mr., 343  
 Unemployed Organization Committee, Speech to the, 231  
*Unionist Record*, The, 324  
 United Empire Trade League, The, 213  
 — Service Institution, Lectures at the, 31, 45, 323  
 — States, Visit to the, 155  
 University of Commerce, Sir Howard advocates an, 196

## V

Vambéry, Professor, 167  
 Van de Velde, Mr., 69  
 Vaughan, Cardinal, 305  
 Victoria, Queen, 68, 265, 325  
 Vincent, Lady, 247  
 — Sir Edgar, 2, 53, 111, 298, 317  
 — Rev. F., 2  
 — Personal appearance of Sir Howard, 267  
 Vincents, Four Lady, 298  
 Vogel, Sir Julius, 213  
 Voice, Sir Howard's, 192  
 Volunteer, Sir Howard as a, 263  
 "— Why did I become a," 261  
 Voyage round the World, 151

## W

Wales, Prince of, 121, 132, 138, 196, 306  
 Wallace, Sir D. M., 30  
 Wallingford, 149  
 Walsh, Archbishop, 183  
 — Thomas, 124

- Walton, Mr. J. Lawson, 292
- War correspondent, Sir Howard at-  
tempts to become a, 15
- Warmington, Mr., 288
- Warsaw, 28
- Water Bill, Mr. Cross's, 147
- Watson, Sir Henry, 162
- Webster, Catherine, 73
- Welsh Fusiliers, The Royal, 319
- — Benevolent Fund, The, 251
- Westminster, The City of, 149
- Duke of, 265
- Liberal Association, 156
- School, 4
- Schoolboys, Sir Howard and two, 241
- Whohoopoe, The, 297
- Williamson, Chief Superintendent, 62,  
64
- Wilson, Sir Charles, 28
- Windsor, 149
- Wolff, Mr. Lucien, 342
- Wolseley, Lord, 251, 323
- Wolverhampton, Chief Constable of,  
367
- Woolwich, 26, 31
- Wrexham Church, Memorial in,  
362
- Wyke, Sir Charles, 26
- Wynberg, 244
- Wyndham, Mr. George, 327

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